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THE WORKS
of
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE
Dramatic and Poetical
 with an Account of his Life and Writings
Knight's Cabinet Edition
With Additional Notes



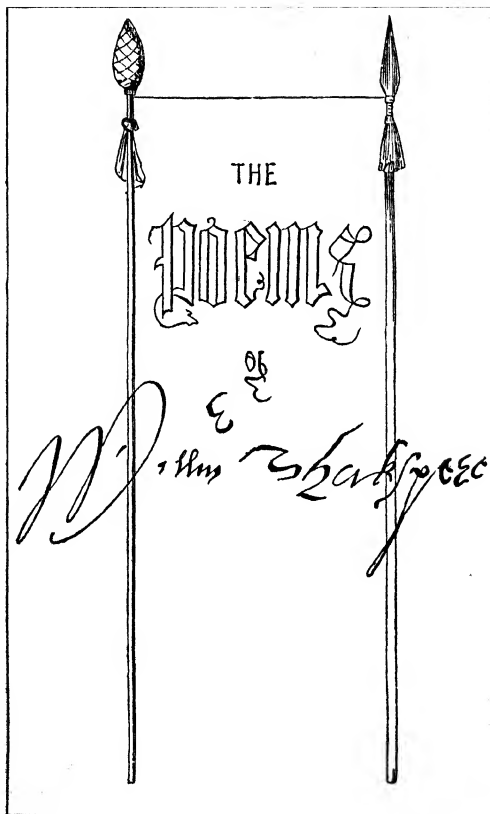
VOLUME XL.

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THE
P O E M S
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPERE

WITH
Facts connected with his Life
ABRIDGED FROM
'WILLIAM SHAKSPERE, A BIOGRAPHY'

EDINBURGH
W. & R. CHAMBERS



NOTICE.

THE present edition of the Poems of Shakspeare comprises the VENUS AND ADONIS, THE RAPE OF LUCRECE, THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM, THE LOVER'S COMPLAINT, and the SONNETS. The Songs from the Plays of Shakspeare are necessarily excluded from this edition, it being sufficient for the reader to make a reference to the Dramas to which they respectively belong.



“If the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather.” These are the words which, in relation to the ‘Venus and Adonis,’ Shakspeare addressed, in 1593, to the Earl of Southampton. Are we to accept them literally? Was the ‘Venus and Adonis’ the first production of Shakspeare’s imagination? Or did he put out of his view those dramatic performances which he had then unquestionably produced, in deference to the critical opinions which regarded plays as works not belonging to “invention”? We think that he used the words in a literal sense. We regard the ‘Venus and Adonis’ as the production of a very young man, improved, perhaps, considerably in the interval between its first composition and its publication, but distinguished by peculiarities which belong to the wild luxuriance of youthful power,—such power, however, as few besides Shakspeare have ever possessed.

A deep thinker and eloquent writer, Julius Charles Hare, thus describes “the spirit of self-sacrifice,” as applied to poetry :—

“The might of the imagination is manifested by its launching forth from the petty creek, where the accidents of birth moored it, into the wide ocean of being—by its going abroad into the world around, passing into

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whatever it meets with, animating it, and becoming one with it. This complete union and identification of the poet with his poem,—this suppression of his own individual insulated consciousness, with its narrowness of thought and pettiness of feeling,—is what we admire in the great masters of that which for this reason we justly call classical poetry, as representing that which is symbolical and universal, not that which is merely occasional and peculiar. This gives them that majestic calmness which still breathes upon us from the statues of their gods. This invests their works with that lucid transparent atmosphere wherein every form stands out in perfect definiteness and distinctness, only beautified by the distance which idealizes it. This has delivered those works from the casualties of time and space, and has lifted them up like stars into the pure firmament of thought, so that they do not shine on one spot alone, nor fade like earthly flowers, but journey on from clime to clime, shedding the light of beauty on generation after generation. The same quality, amounting to a total extinction of his own selfish being, so that his spirit became a mighty organ through which Nature gave utterance to the full diapason of her notes, is what we wonder at in our own great dramatist, and is the groundwork of all his other powers : for it is only when purged of selfishness that the intellect becomes fitted for receiving the inspirations of genius.*

What Mr. Hare so justly considers as the great moving principle of "classical poetry,"—what he fur-

* 'The Victory of Faith; and other Sermons.' By Julius Charles Hare, M.A. 1840. P. 277.

ther notes as the pre-eminent characteristic of "our own great dramatist,"—is abundantly found in that great dramatist's earliest work. Coleridge was the first to point out this pervading quality in the 'Venus and Adonis;' and he has done this so admirably, that it would be profanation were we to attempt to elucidate the point in any other than his own words:—

"It is throughout as if a superior spirit, more intuitive, more intimately conscious, even than the characters themselves, not only of every outward look and act, but of the flux and reflux of the mind in all its subtlest thoughts and feelings, were placing the whole before our view; himself meanwhile unparticipating in the passions, and actuated only by that pleasurable excitement which had resulted from the energetic fervour of his own spirit in so vividly exhibiting what it had so accurately and profoundly contemplated. I think I should have conjectured from these poems, that even then the great instinct which impelled the poet to the drama was secretly working in him, prompting him by a series and never-broken chain of imagery, always vivid, and, because unbroken, often minute,—by the highest effort of the picturesque in words of which words are capable, higher perhaps than was ever realised by any other poet, even Dante not excepted,—to provide a substitute for that visual language, that constant intervention and running comment by tone, look, and gesture, which in his dramatic works he was entitled to expect from the players. His Venus and Adonis seem at once the characters themselves, and the whole representation of those characters by the most consummate actors. You

seem to be *told* nothing, but to see and hear everything. Hence it is, that, from the perpetual activity of attention required on the part of the reader,—from the rapid flow, the quick change, and the playful nature of the thoughts and images,—and, above all, from the alienation, and, if I may hazard such an expression, the utter *aloofness* of the poet's own feelings from those of which he is at once the painter and the analyst,—that though the very subject cannot but detract from the pleasure of a delicate mind, yet never was poem less dangerous on a moral account.”*

Coleridge, in the preceding chapter of his ‘Literary Life,’ says, “During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry—the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination.” In Coleridge’s ‘Literary Remains’ the ‘Venus and Adonis’ is cited as furnishing a signal example of “that affectionate love of nature and natural objects, without which no man could have observed so steadily, or painted so truly and passionately, the very minutest beauties of the external world.” The description of the hare-hunt is there given at length as a specimen of this power. A remarkable proof of the completeness as well as accuracy of Shakspeare’s description lately presented itself to our mind, in running through a little volume, full of talent, published in 1825—‘Essays and Sketches of Character, by the late Richard Ayton,

* ‘Biographia Literaria,’ 1817, vol. ii. p. 15.

Esq.' There is a paper on hunting, and especially on hare-hunting. He says—"I am not one of the perfect fox-hunters of these realms ; but having been in the way of late of seeing a good deal of various modes of hunting, I would, for the benefit of the uninitiated, set down the results of my observations." In this matter he writes with a perfect unconsciousness that he is describing what any one has described before. But as accurate an observer *had* been before him :—

· "She (the hare) generally returns to the seat from which she was put up, running, as all the world knows, in a circle, or something sometimes like it, we had better say, that we may keep on good terms with the mathematical. At starting, she tears away at her utmost speed for a mile or more, and distances the dogs half-way : she then returns, diverging a little to the right or left, that she may not run into the mouths of her enemies—a necessity which accounts for what we call the circularity of her course. Her flight from home is direct and precipitate ; but on her way back, when she has gained a little time for consideration and stratagem, she describes a curious labyrinth of short turnings and windings, as if to perplex the dogs by the intricacy of her track."

Compare this with Shakspeare :—

" And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,
Mark the poor wretch, to overshoot his troubles,
How he outruns the wind, and with what care
He cranks and crosses, with a thousand doubles :
The many musits through the which he goes
Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes."

Mr. Ayton thus goes on :—

“ The hounds, whom we left in full cry, continue their music without remission as long as they are faithful to the scent ; as a summons, it should seem, like the seaman’s cry, to pull together, or keep together, and it is a certain proof to themselves and their followers that they are in the right way. On the instant that they are ‘ at fault,’ or lose the scent, they are silent. * * * The weather, in its impression on the scent, is the great father of ‘ faults ;’ but they may arise from other accidents, even when the day is in every respect favourable. The intervention of ploughed land, on which the scent soon cools or evaporates, is at least perilous ; but sheep-stains, recently left by a flock, are fatal : they cut off the scent irrecoverably—making a gap, as it were, in the clue, in which the dogs have not even a hint for their guidance.”

Compare Shakspeare again :—

“ Sometime he runs among a flock of sheep,
To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell
And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,
To stop the loud pursuers in their yell ;
And sometime sorteth with a herd of deer ;
Danger deviseth shifts ; wit waits on fear :
“ For there his smell with others being mingled,
The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,
Ceasing their clamorous cry till they have singled
With much ado the cold fault cleanly out ;
Then do they spend their mouths : Echo replies,
As if another chase were in the skies.”

One more extract from Mr. Ayton :—

“ Suppose then, after the usual rounds, that you see

the hare at last (a sorry mark for so many foes) sorely beleaguered—looking dark and draggled—and limping heavily along; then stopping to listen—again tottering on a little—and again stopping; and at every step, and every pause, hearing the death-cry grow nearer and louder.”

One more comparison, and we have exhausted Shakspeare's description:—

“ By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,
To hearken if his foes pursue him still;
Anon their loud alarums he doth hear;
And now his grief may be compared well
To one sore sick that hears the passing-bell.

“ Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
Turn and return, indenting with the way:
Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,
Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay;
For misery is trodden on by many,
And being low never reliev'd by any.”

Here, then, be it observed, are not only the same objects, the same accidents, the same movement, in each description, but the very words employed to convey the scene to the mind are often the same in each. It would be easy to say that Mr. Ayton copied Shakspeare. We believe he did not. There is a sturdy ingenuousness about his writings which would have led him to notice the ‘*Venus and Adonis*’ if he had had it in his mind. Shakspeare and he had each looked minutely and practically upon the same scene; and the wonder is, not that Shakspeare was an accurate describer, but that in

him the accurate is so thoroughly fused with the poetical, that it is one and the same life.

The celebrated description of the courser in the 'Venus and Adonis' is another remarkable instance of the accuracy of the young Shakspeare's observation. Not the most experienced dealer ever knew the *points* of a horse better. The whole poem indeed is full of evidence that the circumstances by which the writer was surrounded, in a country district, had entered deeply into his mind, and were reproduced in the poetical form. The bird "tangled in a net"—the "di-dapper peering through a wave"—the "blue-veined violets"—the

"Red morn, that ever yet betoken'd
Wreck to the seaman, tempest to the field"—

the fisher that forbears the "ungrown fry"—the sheep "gone to fold"—the caterpillars feeding on "the tender leaves"—and, not to weary with examples, that exquisite image,

"Look how a bright star shooteth from the sky,
So glides he in the night from Venus' eye"—

all these bespeak a poet who had formed himself upon nature, and not upon books. To understand the value as well as the rarity of this quality in Shakspeare, we should open any contemporary poem. Take Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander' for example. We read line after line, beautiful, gorgeous, running over with a satiating luxuriousness; but we look in vain for a single familiar image. Shakspeare describes what he has seen, throwing over the real the delicious tint of his own imagination. Marlowe looks at Nature herself very rarely; but he

knows all the conventional images by which the real is supposed to be elevated into the poetical. His most beautiful things are thus but copies of copies. The mode in which each poet describes the morning will illustrate our meaning :—

“ Lo! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
The sun ariseth in his majesty;
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
The cedar-tops and hills seem burnish'd gold.”

We feel that *this* is true. Compare—

“ By this Apollo's golden harp began
To sound forth music to the ocean;
Which watchful Hesperus no sooner heard
But he the day bright-bearing car prepar'd,
And ran before, as harbinger of light,
And with his flaring beams mock'd ugly Night,
Till she, o'ercome with anguish, shame, and rage,
Daug'd down to hell her loathsome carriage.”

We are taught that *this* is classical.

Coleridge has observed that, “ in the ‘ Venus and Adonis,’ the first and most obvious excellence is the perfect sweetness of the versification; its adaptation to the subject; and the power displayed in varying the march of the words without passing into a loftier and more majestic rhythm than was demanded by the thoughts, or permitted by the propriety of preserving a sense of melody predominant.”* This self-controlling power of “ varying the march of the words without passing into a loftier and more majestic rhythm ” is perhaps one

* ‘ Biographia Literaria,’ vol. ii. p. 14.

of the most signal instances of Shakspeare's consummate mastery of his art, even as a very young man. He who, at the proper season, knew how to strike the grandest music within the compass of our own powerful and sonorous language, in his early productions breathes out his thoughts

" To the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorder."

The sustained sweetness of the versification is never cloying; and yet there are no violent contrasts, no sudden elevations: all is equable in its infinite variety. The early comedies are full of the same rare beauty. In 'Love's Labour's Lost'—'The Comedy of Errors'—'A Midsummer Night's Dream'—we have verses of alternate rhymes formed upon the same model as those of the 'Venus and Adonis,' and producing the same feeling of placid delight by their exquisite harmony. The same principles on which he built the versification of the 'Venus and Adonis' exhibited to him the grace which these elegiac harmonies would impart to the scenes of repose in the progress of a dramatic action.

We proceed to the 'Lucrece.' Of that poem the date of the composition is fixed as accurately as we can desire. In the dedication to the 'Venus and Adonis' the poet says—"If your honour seem but pleased I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have honoured you with some graver labour." In 1594, a year after the 'Venus and Adonis,' 'Lucrece' was published, and was dedicated to Lord Southampton. This, then, was

undoubtedly the "graver labour;" this was the produce of the "idle hours" of 1593. Shakspeare was then nearly thirty years of age—the period at which it is held by some he first began to produce anything original for the stage. The poet unquestionably intended the "graver labour" for a higher effort than had produced the "first heir" of his invention. He describes the 'Venus and Adonis' as "unpolished lines"—lines thrown off with youthful luxuriousness and rapidity. The verses of the 'Lucrece' are "untutored lines"—lines formed upon no established model. There is to our mind the difference of eight or even ten years in the aspect of these poems—a difference as manifest as that which exists between 'Love's Labour's Lost' and 'Romeo and Juliet.' Coleridge has marked the great distinction between the one poem and the other:—

"The 'Venus and Adonis' did not perhaps allow the display of the deeper passions. But the story of Lucretia seems to favour, and even demand, their intensest workings. And yet we find in *Shakespeare's* management of the tale neither pathos nor any other *dramatic* quality. There is the same minute and faithful imagery as in the former poem, in the same vivid colours, inspired by the same impetuous vigour of thought, and diverging and contracting with the same activity of the assimilative and of the modifying faculties; and with a yet larger display, a yet wider range of knowledge and reflection: and, lastly, with the same perfect dominion, often *domination*, over the whole world of language."

It is in this paragraph that Coleridge has marked the difference—which a critic of the very highest order could alone have pointed out—between the power which Shakspeare's mind possessed of going out of itself in a narrative poem, and the dramatic power. The same mighty, and to most unattainable, power, of utterly subduing the self-conscious to the universal, was essential to the highest excellence of both species of composition,—the poem and the drama. But the exercise of that power was essentially different in each. Coleridge, in another place, says, “in his very first production he projected his mind out of his own particular being, and felt, and made others feel, on subjects no way connected with himself except by force of contemplation, and that sublime faculty by which a great mind becomes that on which it meditates.”* But this “sublime faculty” went greatly farther when it became dramatic. In the narrative poems of an ordinary man we perpetually see the narrator. Coleridge, in a passage previously quoted, has shown the essential superiority of Shakspeare's narrative poems, where the whole is placed before our view, the poet unparticipating in the passions. There is a remarkable example of how strictly Shakspeare adhered to this principle in his beautiful poem of ‘A Lover's Complaint.’ There the poet is actually present to the scene :—

“ From off a hill whose concave womb re-worded
A plaintful story from a sistering vale,
My spirits to attend this double voice accorded,
And down I laid to list the sad-tun'd tale.”

But not one word of comment does he offer upon the revelations of the "fickle maid full pale." The dramatic power, however, as we have said, is many steps beyond this. It dispenses with narrative altogether. It renders a complicated story, or stories, *one* in the action. It makes the characters reveal *themselves*, sometimes by a word. It trusts for everything to the capacity of an audience to appreciate the greatest subtilities, and the nicest shades of passion, *through* the action. It is the very reverse of the oratorical power, which repeats and explains. And how is it able to effect this prodigious mastery over the senses and the understanding? By raising the mind of the spectator, or reader, into such a state of poetical excitement as corresponds in some degree to the excitement of the poet, and thus clears away the mists of our ordinary vision, and irradiates the whole complex moral world in which we for a time live, and move, and have our being, with the brightness of his own intellectual sunlight. Now, it appears to us that, although the 'Venus and Adonis,' and the 'Lucrece,' do not pretend to be the creations of this wonderful power—their forms did not demand its complete exercise—they could not have been produced by a man who did not possess the power, and had assiduously cultivated it in its own proper field. In the second poem, more especially, do we think the power has reached a higher development, indicating itself in "a yet wider range of knowledge and reflection."

Malone says, "I have observed that Painter has inserted the story of Lucrece in the first volume of his

'Palace of Pleasure,' 1567, on which I make no doubt our author formed his poem." Be it so. The story of Lucrece in Painter's novel occupies four pages. The first page describes the circumstances that preceded the unholy visit of Tarquin to Lucrece; nearly the whole of the two last pages detail the events that followed the death of Lucrece. A page and a half at most is given to the tragedy. This is proper enough in a narrative, whose business it is to make all the circumstances intelligible. But the narrative poet, who was also thoroughly master of the dramatic power, concentrates all the interest upon the main circumstances of the story. He places the scene of those circumstances before our eyes at the very opening:—

" From the besieged Ardea all in post,
Borne by the trustless wings of false desire,
Lust-breathed Tarquin leaves the Roman host,
And to Collatium bears," &c.

The preceding circumstances which impel this journey are then rapidly told. Again, after the crowning action of the tragedy, the poet has done. He tells the consequences of it with a brevity and simplicity indicating the most consummate art:

" When they had sworn to this advised doom,
They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence;
To show her bleeding body thorough Rome,
And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence:
Which being done with speedy diligence,
The Romans plausibly did give consent
To Tarquin's everlasting banishment."

He has thus cleared away all the encumbrances to the progress of the main action. He would have done the

same had he made Lucrece the subject of a drama. But he has to tell his painful story and to tell it all : not to exhibit a portion of it, as he would have done had he chosen the subject for a tragedy. The consummate delicacy with which he has accomplished this is beyond all praise, perhaps above all imitation. He puts forth his strength on the accessories of the main incident. He delights to make the chief actors analyse their own thoughts,—reflect, explain, expostulate. All this is essentially undramatic, and he meant it to be so. But then, what pictures does he paint of the progress of the action, which none but a great dramatic poet, who had visions of future Macbeths and Othellos before him, could have painted! Look, for example, at that magnificent scene, when

“ No comfortable star did lend his light,”

of Tarquin leaping from his bed, and, softly smiting his falchion on a flint, lighting a torch

“ Which must be lode-star to his lustful eye.”

Look, again, at the exquisite domestic incident which tells of the quiet and gentle occupation of his devoted victim :—

“ By the light he spies

Lucretia's glove, wherein her needle sticks ;

He takes it from the rushes where it lies.”

The hand to which that glove belongs is described in the very perfection of poetry :—

“ Without the bed her other fair hand was,

On the green coverlet ; whose perfect white

Show'd like an April daisy on the grass.”

In the chamber of innocence Tarquin is painted with

terrific grandeur, which is overpowering by the force of contrast :—

“ This said, he shakes aloft his Roman blade,
Which, like a falcon towering in the skies,
Coucheth the fowl below with his wings' shade.”

The complaint of Lucrece after Tarquin has departed was meant to be undramatic. The action advances not. The character develops not itself in the action. But the poet makes his heroine bewail her fate in every variety of lament that his boundless command of imagery could furnish. The letter to Collatine is written ;—a letter of the most touching simplicity :—

“ Thou worthy lord
Of that unworthy wife that greeteth thee,
Health to thy person ! Next vouchsafe to afford
(If ever, love, thy Lucrece thou wilt see)
Some present speed to come and visit me :
So I commend me from our house in grief ;
My woes are tedious, though my words are brief.”

Again the action languishes, and again Lucrece surrenders herself to her grief. The

“ Skilful painting, made for Priam's Troy ”

is one of the most elaborate passages of the poem, essentially cast in an undramatic mould. But this is but a prelude to the catastrophe, where, if we mistake not, a strength of passion is put forth which is worthy him who drew the terrible agonies of Lear :—

“ Here with a sigh, as if her heart would break,
She throws forth Tarquin's name : ‘ He, he,’ she says,
But more than ‘ he ’ her poor tongue could not speak ;
Till after many accents and delays,
Untimely breathings, sick and short assays,
She utters this : ‘ He, he, fair lords, ’t is he,
That guides this hand to give this wound to me.”

Malone, in his concluding remarks upon the ‘Venus and Adonis,’ and ‘Lucrece,’ says, “We should do Shakspeare injustice were we to try them by a comparison with more modern and polished productions, or with our present idea of poetical excellence.” This was written in the year 1780—the period which rejoiced in the “polished productions” of Hayley and Miss Seward, and founded its “idea of poetical excellence” on some standard which, secure in its conventional forms, might depart as far as possible from simplicity and nature, to give us words without thought, arranged in verses without music. It would be injustice indeed to Shakspeare to try the ‘Venus and Adonis,’ and ‘Lucrece,’ by such a standard of “poetical excellence.” But we have outlived that period. By way of apology for Shakspeare, Malone adds, “that few authors rise much above the age in which they live.” He further says, “the poems of ‘Venus and Adonis’ and the ‘Rape of Lucrece,’ whatever opinion may be now entertained of them, were certainly much admired in Shakspeare’s lifetime.” This is consolatory. In Shakspeare’s lifetime there were a few men that the world has since thought somewhat qualified to establish an “idea of poetical excellence” — Spenser, Drayton, Jonson, Fletcher, Chapman, for example. These were not much valued in Malone’s golden age of “more modern and polished productions;”—but let that pass. We are coming back to the opinions of this obsolete school; and we venture to think the majority of readers now will not require us to make an apology for Shakspeare’s poems.

If Malone thought it necessary to solicit indulgence for the 'Venus and Adonis,' and 'Lucrece,' he drew even a more timid breath when he ventured to speak of the 'Sonnets.' "I do not feel any great propensity to stand forth as the champion of these compositions. However, as it appears to me that they have been somewhat underrated, I think it incumbent on me to do them that justice to which they seem entitled." No wonder he speaks timidly. The great poetical lawgiver of his time—the greater than Shakspeare, for he undertook to mend him, and refine him, and make him fit to be tolerated by the super-elegant intellects of the days of George III.—had pronounced that the 'Sonnets' were too bad even for his genius to make tolerable. He, Steevens, who would take up a play of Shakspeare's in the condescending spirit with which a clever tutor takes up a smart boy's verses,—altering a word here, piecing out a line there, commending this thought, shaking his head at this false prosody, and acknowledging upon the whole that the thing is pretty well, seeing how much the lad has yet to learn—he sent forth his decree that nothing less than an act of parliament could compel the reading of Shakspeare's 'Sonnets.' For a long time mankind bowed before the oracle; and the 'Sonnets' were not read. Wordsworth has told us something about this:—

"There is extant a small volume of miscellaneous poems in which Shakspeare expresses his feelings in his own person. It is not difficult to conceive that the editor, George Steevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that volume, the 'Sonnets;'

though there is not a part of the writings of this poet where is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an act of parliament not being strong enough to compel the perusal of these, or any production of Shakspeare, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in those little pieces." *

That ignorance has been removed; and no one has contributed more to its removal, by creating a school of poetry founded upon Truth and Nature, than Wordsworth himself. The critics of the last century have passed away:—

“Peor and Baālim
Forsake their temples dim.”

By the operation of what great sustaining principle is it that we have come back to the just appreciation of “the treasures contained in those little pieces”? The poet-critic will answer:—

“There never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good; but this advantage attends the good, that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age: whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal, the individual quickly *perishes*; the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced, which, though no better, brings with it at least

* Preface to Poetical Works.

the irritation of novelty,—with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention. Is it the result of the whole, that, in the opinion of the writer, the judgment of the people is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious; and, could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The people have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it is said, above—that, of *good* poetry, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*. And how does it survive but through the people? what preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom?

‘ Past and future are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoin’d,
Moves the great spirit of human knowledge.’—MS.

The voice that issues from this spirit is that *vox populi* which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry—transitory though it be for years, local though from a nation! Still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is anything of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE.”*

It is this perpetual mistake of the public for the people that has led to the belief that there was a period when Shakspeare was neglected. He was *always* in the heart

* Preface to Poetical Works.

of the people. There, in that deep, rich soil, have the Sonnets rested during two centuries; and here and there in remote places have the seeds put forth leaves and flowers. All young imaginative minds now rejoice in their hues and their fragrance. But this preference of the fresh and beautiful of poetical life to the *pot-pourri* of the last age must be a regulated love. Those who, seeing the admiration which now prevails for these out-pourings of "exquisite feelings felicitously expressed," talk of the 'Sonnets' as equal, if not superior, to the greatest of the poet's mighty dramas, compare things that admit of no comparison. Who would speak in the same breath of the gem of Cupid and Psyche, and the Parthenon? In the 'Sonnets,' exquisite as they are, the poet goes not out of himself (at least in the *form* of the composition), and he walks, therefore, in a narrow circle of art. In the 'Venus and Adonis,' and the 'Lucrece,' the circle widens. But in the Dramas, the centre is the Human Soul, the circumference the Universe.





WENN

ADAM



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY WRIOTHESLEY,
EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON, AND BARON OF TITCHFIELD.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

I KNOW not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burthen: only if your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear^a so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour^b to your heart's content; which I wish may always answer your own wish, and the world's hopeful expectation.

Your Honour's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

^a *Ear*—plough.

^b *Honour*. As a duke is now styled "your grace," so "your honour" was formerly the usual mode of address to noblemen in general.

VENUS AND ADONIS.

EVEN as the sun with purple-colour'd face
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,
Rose-cheek'd Adonis hied him to the chase;
Hunting he lov'd, but love he laugh'd to scorn;
Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,
And like a bold-fac'd suitor 'gins to woo him.

"Thrice fairer than myself," thus she began,
"The field's chief flower, sweet above compare,
Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man,
More white and red than doves or roses are;
Nature that made thee, with herself at strife,
Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.

"Vouchsafe, thou wonder, to alight thy steed,
And rein his proud head to the saddle-bow;
If thou wilt deign this favour, for thy meed
A thousand honey-secrets shalt thou know:
Here come and sit, where never serpent hisses,
And being set I 'll smother thee with kisses;

"And yet not cloy thy lips with loath'd satiety,
But rather furnish them amid their plenty,
Making them red and pale with fresh variety,
Ten kisses short as one, one long as twenty:
A summer's day will seem an hour but short,
Being wasted in such time-beguiling sport."

With this she seizeth on his sweating palm,
The precedent of pith and livelihood,
And, trembling in her passion, calls it balm,
Earth's sovereign salve to do a goddess good:

Being so enrag'd, desire doth lend her force
Courageously to pluck him from his horse.

Over one arm the lusty courser's rein,
Under her other was the tender boy,
Who blush'd and pouted in a dull disdain,
With leaden appetite, unapt to toy ;
She red and hot as coals of glowing fire,
He red for shame, but frosty in desire.

The studded bridle on a ragged bough
Nimble she fastens ; (O how quick is love !)
The steed is stalled up, and even now
To tie the rider she begins to prove :
Backward she push'd him, as she would be thrust,
And govern'd him in strength, though not in lust.

So soon was she along, as he was down,
Each leaning on their elbows and their hips :
Now doth she stroke his cheek, now doth he frown,
And 'gins to chide, but soon she stops his lips ;
And kissing speaks, with lustful language broken,
" If thou wilt chide, thy lips shall never open."

He burns with bashful shame ; she with her tears
Doth quench the maiden burning of his cheeks :
Then with her windy sighs, and golden hairs,
To fan and blow them dry again she seeks :
He saith she is immodest, blames her 'miss ;^a
What follows more she murders with a kiss.

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast,
Tires^b with her beak on feathers, flesh, and bone,
Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,
Till either gorge be stuff'd, or prey be gone ;
Even so she kiss'd his brow, his cheek, his chin,
And where she ends she doth anew begin.

^a 'Miss—amiss, fault.

^b Tires—tears, preys.

Forc'd to content,^a but never to obey,
 Panting he lies, and breatheth in her face;
 She feedeth on the steam, as on a prey,
 And calls it heavenly moisture, air of grace,
 Wishing her cheeks were gardens full of flowers,
 So they were dew'd with such distilling showers.

Look how a bird lies tangled in a net,
 So fasten'd in her arms Adonis lies;
 Pure shame and aw'd resistance made him fret,
 Which bred more beauty in his angry eyes:
 Rain added to a river that is rank,^b
 Perforce will force it overflow the bank.

Still she entreats, and prettily entreats,
 For to a pretty ear she tunes her tale;
 Still is he sullen, still he low'rs and frets,
 'Twixt crimson shame, and anger ashy pale;
 Being red, she loves him best; and being white,
 Her best is better'd with a more delight.

Look how he can, she cannot choose but love;
 And by her fair immortal hand she swears
 From his soft bosom never to remove,
 Till he take truce with her contending tears,
 Which long have rain'd, making her cheeks all wet;
 And one sweet kiss shall pay this countless debt.

Upon this promise did he raise his chin,
 Like a dive-dapper^c peering through a wave,

^a *Content*—acquiescence.

^b *Rank*—full. Rank is often used to express excess or violence generally; and rankness is applied to a flood, in 'King John,' Act V. sc. 4:—

"And like a bated and retired flood,
 Leaving our rankness and irregular course."

^c *Dive-dapper*. One of the familiar names of the dab-chick is dive-dapper, or di-dapper; and this was the old poetical name.

Who, being look'd on, ducks as quickly in ;
So offers he to give what she did crave ;
But when her lips were ready for his pay,
He winks, and turns his lips another way.

Never did passenger in summer's heat
More thirst for drink, than she for this good turn :
Her help she sees, but help she cannot get ;
She bathes in water, yet her fire must burn :
" O, pity," 'gan she cry, " flint-hearted boy !
'Tis but a kiss I beg ; why art thou coy ?

" I have been woo'd, as I entreat thee now,
Even by the stern and direful god of war,
Whose sinewy neck in battle ne'er did bow,
Who conquers where he comes, in every jar :
Yet hath he been my captive and my slave,
And begg'd for that which thou unask'd shalt have.

" Over my altars hath he hung his lance,
His batter'd shield, his uncontrolled crest,
And for my sake hath learn'd to sport and dance,
To toy, to wanton, dally, smile, and jest ;
Scorning his churlish drum, and ensign red,
Making my arms his field, his tent my bed.

" Thus he that overrul'd I oversway'd,
Leading him prisoner in a red-rose chain :
Strong-temper'd steel his stronger strength obey'd,
Yet was he servile to my coy disdain.
O be not proud, nor brag not of thy might,
For mastering her that foil'd the god of fight !

" Touch but my lips with those fair lips of thine,
(Though mine be not so fair, yet are they red,)
The kiss shall be thine own as well as mine :—
What seest thou in the ground ? hold up thy head ;
Look in mine eyeballs, there thy beauty lies :
Then why not lips on lips, since eyes in eyes ?

" Art thou asham'd to kiss ? then wink again,
 And I will wink, so shall the day seem night :
 Love keeps his revels where there are but twain ;
 Be bold to play, our sport is not in sight :
 These blue-vein'd violets whereon we lean
 Never can blab, nor know not what we mean.

" The tender spring upon thy tempting lip
 Shows thee unripe ; yet may'st thou well be tasted ;
 Make use of time, let not advantage slip ;
 Beauty within itself should not be wasted :
 Fair flowers that are not gather'd in their prime
 Rot and consume themselves in little time.

" Were I hard-favour'd, foul, or wrinkled-old,
 Ill-nurtur'd, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,
 O'er-worn, despised, rheumatic, and cold,
 Thick-sighted, barren, lean, and lacking juice,
 Then mightst thou pause, for then I were not for thee ;
 But having no defects, why dost abhor me ?

" Thou canst not see one wrinkle in my brow ;
 Mine eyes are grey,^a and bright, and quick in turning ;
 My beauty as the spring doth yearly grow,
 My flesh is soft and plump, my marrow burning ;
 My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand felt,
 Would in thy palm dissolve, or seem to melt.

" Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear,
 Or, like a fairy, trip upon the green,
 Or, like a nymph, with long dishevell'd hair,
 Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen :
 Love is a spirit all compact of fire,
 Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire.

^a *Grey* is said to be here used as *blue*. We have subsequently—

" Her two *blue* windows faintly she upheaveth."
 But the *eye-lids* are the " blue windows."

" Witness this primrose bank whereon I lie ;
These forceless flowers like sturdy trees support me ;
Two strengthless doves will draw me through the sky,
From morn to night, even where I list to sport me :
Is love so light, sweet boy, and may it be
That thou shouldst think it heavy unto thee ?

" Is thine own heart to thine own face affected ?
Can thy right hand seize love upon thy left ?
Then woo thyself, be of thyself rejected,
Steal thine own freedom, and complain on theft.
Narcissus so himself himself forsook,
And died to kiss his shadow in the brook.

" Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,
Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,
Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear ;
Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse :
Seeds spring from seeds, and beauty breedeth beauty,
Thou wast begot,—to get it is thy duty.

" Upon the earth's increase why shouldst thou feed,
Unless the earth with thy increase be fed ?
By law of Nature thou art bound to breed,
That thine may live, when thou thyself art dead ;
And so in spite of death thou dost survive,
In that thy likeness still is left alive."

By this the love-sick queen began to sweat,
For, where they lay, the shadow had forsook them,
And Titan, 'tired^a in the midday heat,
With burning eye did hotly overlook them ;
Wishing Adonis had his team to guide,
So he were like him, and by Venus' side.

And now Adonis, with a lazy spright,
And with a heavy, dark, disliking eye,

^a 'Tired—attired.

His lowering brows o'erwhelming his fair sight,
 Like misty vapours when they blot the sky,
 Souring his cheeks, cries, "Fie, no more of love!
 The sun doth burn my face; I must remove."

"Ah me," quoth Venus, "young, and so unkind!
 What bare excuses mak'st thou to be gone!
 I'll sigh celestial breath, whose gentle wind
 Shall cool the heat of this descending sun;
 I'll make a shadow for thee of my hairs;
 If they burn too, I'll quench them with my tears."

"The sun that shines from heaven shines but warm,
 And lo, I lie between that sun and thee;
 The heat I have from thence doth little harm,
 Thine eye darts forth the fire that burneth me:
 And were I not immortal, life were done,
 Between this heavenly and earthly sun."

"Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel,
 Nay, more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth?
 Art thou a woman's son, and canst not feel
 What 't is to love? how want of love tormenteth?
 O had thy mother borne so hard a mind,
 She had not brought forth thee, but died unkind.^a

"What am I, that thou shouldst contemn^b me this?
 Or what great danger dwells upon my suit?
 What were thy lips the worse for one poor kiss?
 Speak, fair; but speak fair words, or else be mute:
 Give me one kiss, I'll give it thee again,
 And one for interest, if thou wilt have twain."

^a *Unkind*. Milton applies the same epithet, in the same way, in his 'Doctrine of Divorce':—"The desire and longing to put off an *unkindly* solitariness by uniting another body, but not without a fit soul, to his, in the cheerful society of wedlock."

^b *Contemn* is here used in the sense of throw aside.

"Fie, lifeless picture, cold and senseless stone,
Well-painted idol, image dull and dead,
Statue contenting but the eye alone,
Thing like a man, but of no woman bred ;
Thou art no man, though of a man's complexion,
For men will kiss even by their own direction."

This said, impatience chokes her pleading tongue,
And swelling passion doth provoke a pause ;
Red cheeks and fiery eyes blaze forth her wrong ;
Being judge in love, she cannot right her cause :
And now she weeps, and now she fain would speak,
And now her sobs do her intendments^a break.

Sometimes she shakes her head, and then his hand,
Now gazeth she on him, now on the ground ;
Sometimes her arms infold him like a band ;
She would, he will not in her arms be bound ;
And when from thence he struggles to be gone,
She locks her lily fingers one in one.

"Fondling," she saith, "since I have hemm'd thee
here,
Within the circuit of this ivory pale,
I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer ;
Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale :
Graze on my lips ; and if those hills be dry,
Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

"Within this limit is relief enough,
Sweet bottom-grass, and high delightful plain,
Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,
To shelter thee from tempest and from rain ;
Then be my deer, since I am such a park ;
No dog shall rouse thee, tho' a thousand bark."

^a *Intendments*—intentions.

At this Adonis smiles as in disdain,
 That in each cheek appears a pretty dimple :
 Love made those hollows, if himself were slain,
 He might be buried in a tomb so simple ;
 Foreknowing well if there he came to lie,
 Why there Love liv'd and there he could not die.

These lovely caves, these round-enchancing pits,
 Open'd their mouths to swallow Venus' liking :
 Being mad before, how doth she now for wits ?
 Struck dead at first, what needs a second striking ?
 Poor queen of love, in thine own law forlorn,
 To love a cheek that smiles at thee in scorn !

Now which way shall she turn ? what shall she say ?
 Her words are done, her woes the more increasing,
 The time is spent, her object will away,
 And from her twining arms doth urge releasing :
 " Pity " — she cries, — " some favour — some re-
 morse^a — "

Away he springs, and hasteth to his horse.

But lo, from forth a copse that neighbours by,
 A breeding jennet, lusty, young, and proud,
 Adonis' trampling courser doth espy,
 And forth she rushes, snorts, and neighs aloud :
 The strong-neck'd steed, being tied unto a tree,
 Breaketh his rein, and to her straight goes he.

Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,
 And now his woven girths he breaks asunder ;
 The bearing earth with his hard hoof he wounds,
 Whose hollow womb resounds like heaven's thunder ;
 The iron bit he crushes 'tween his teeth,
 Controlling what he was controlled with.

^a *Remorse*—tenderness.

His ears up prick'd ; his braided hanging mane
 Upon his compass'd ^a crest now stand on end ;^b
 His nostrils drink the air, and forth again,
 As from a furnace, vapours doth he send :

His eye, which scornfully glisters like fire,
 Shows his hot courage and his high desire.

Sometime he trots, as if he told the steps,
 With gentle majesty, and modest pride ;
 Anon he rears upright, curvets, and leaps,
 As who should say, lo ! thus my strength is tried ;
 And this I do to captivate the eye
 Of the fair breeder that is standing by.

What recketh he his rider's angry stir,
 His flattering " holla,"^c or his " Stand, I say " ?
 What cares he now for curb, or pricking spur ?
 For rich caparisons, or trapping gay ?

He sees his love, and nothing else he sees,
 Nor nothing else with his proud sight agrees.

Look when a painter would surpass the life,
 In limning out a well-proportion'd steed,
 His art with nature's workmanship at strife,
 As if the dead the living should exceed ;
 So did this horse excel a common one,
 In shape, in courage, colour, pace, and bone.

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
 Broad breast, full eye, small head, and nostril wide,
 High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
 Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide :

^a *Compass'd*—arched.

^b *Mane* is here used as a plural noun.

^c *Holla*. *Ho* is the ancient interjection, giving notice to stop. The word before us is certainly the same as the French *hola*, and is explained in Cotgrave's French Dictionary as meaning " enough, soft, soft, no more of that."

Look what a horse should have, he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Sometime he scuds far off, and there he stares;
Anon he starts at stirring of a feather;
To bid the wind a base^a he now prepares,
And whe'r he run, or fly, they knew not whether;
For thro' his mane and tail the high wind sings,
Fanning the hairs, who wave like feather'd wings.

He looks upon his love and neighs unto her;
She answers him as if she knew his mind;
Being proud, as females are, to see him woo her,
She puts on outward strangeness, seems unkind;
Spurns at his love, and scorns the heat he feels,
Beating his kind embracements with her heels.

Then, like a melancholy malecontent,
He vails^b his tail, that, like a falling plume,
Cool shadow to his melting buttock lent;
He stamps, and bites the poor flies in his fume:
His love, perceiving how he is enrag'd,
Grew kinder, and his fury was assuag'd.

His testy master goeth about to take him;
When lo, the unback'd breeder, full of fear,
Jealous of catching, swiftly doth forsake him,
With her the horse, and left Adonis there:
As they were mad unto the wood they hie them,
Out-stripping crows that strive to over-fly them.

All swoln with chasing down Adonis sits,
Banning his boisterous and unruly beast;
And now the happy season once more fits,
That love-sick Love by pleading may be blest;

^a In the game of *base*, or *prison base*, one runs and challenges another to pursue.

^b *Vails*—lowers.

For lovers say the heart hath treble wrong,
When it is barr'd the aidance of the tongue.

An oven that is stopp'd, or river stay'd,
Burneth more hotly, swelleth with more rage :
So of concealed sorrow may be said ;
Free vent of words love's fire doth assuage ;
But when the heart's attorney * once is mute,
The client breaks, as desperate in his suit.

He sees her coming, and begins to glow,
Even as a dying coal revives with wind,
And with his bonnet hides his angry brow ;
Looks on the dull earth with disturbed mind ;
Taking no notice that she is so nigh,
For all askaunce he holds her in his eye.

O what a sight it was, wistly to view
How she came stealing to the wayward boy !
To note the fighting conflict of her hue !
How white and red each other did destroy !
But now her cheek was pale, and by and by
It flash'd forth fire, as lightning from the sky.

Now was she just before him as he sat,
And like a lowly lover down she kneels ;
With one fair hand she heaveth up his hat,
Her other tender hand his fair cheek feels :
His tenderer cheek receives her soft hand's print,
As apt as new-fallen snow takes any dint.

O what a war of looks was then between them !
Her eyes, petitioners, to his eyes suing ;

* In 'Richard III.' we have—

“ Why should calamity be full of words ?
Windy attorneys to their client woes.”

The tongue, in the passage before us, is the *attorney* to the heart.

His eyes saw her eyes as they had not seen them ;
 Her eyes woo'd still, his eyes disdain'd the wooing :
 And all this dumb play had his ^a acts made plain
 With tears, which, chorus-like, her eyes did rain.

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
 A lily prison'd in a gaol of snow,
 Or ivory in an alabaster band ;
 So white a friend engirts so white a foe :
 This beauteous combat, wilful and unwilling,
 Show'd like two silver doves that sit a billing.

Once more the engine of her thoughts began :
 "O fairest mover on this mortal round,
 Would thou wert as I am, and I a man,
 My heart all whole as thine, thy heart my wound ;^b
 For one sweet look thy help I would assure thee,
 Though nothing but my body's bane would cure
 thee."

"Give me my hand," saith he, "why dost thou feel it?"
 "Give me my heart," saith she, "and thou shalt have it ;
 O give it me, lest thy hard heart do steel it,
 And being steel'd, soft sighs can never grave it :^c
 Then love's deep groans I never shall regard,
 Because Adonis' heart hath made mine hard."

"For shame," he cries, "let go, and let me go ;
 My day's delight is past, my horse is gone,
 And 't is your fault I am bereft him so ;
 I pray you hence, and leave me here alone :
 For all my mind, my thought, my busy care,
 Is how to get my palfrey from the mare."

Thus she replies : "Thy palfrey, as he should,
 Welcomes the warm approach of sweet desire.

^a *His* for *its*.

^b Malone explains this "thy heart wounded as mine is,"

^c *Grave*—engrave.

Affection is a coal that must be cool'd ;
Else, suffer'd, it will set the heart on fire :
The sea hath bounds, but deep desire hath none,
Therefore no marvel though thy horse be gone.

" How like a jade he stood, tied to the tree,
Servilely master'd with a leathern rein !
But when he saw his love, his youth's fair fee,
He held such petty bondage in disdain ;
Throwing the base thong from his bending crest,
Enfranchising his mouth, his back, his breast.

" Who sees his true love in her naked bed,
Teaching the sheets a whiter hue than white,
But, when his glutton eye so full hath fed,
His other agents aim at like delight ?
Who is so faint that dare not be so bold
To touch the fire, the weather being cold ?

" Let me excuse thy courser, gentle boy ;
And learn of him, I heartily beseech thee,
To take advantage on presented joy ;
Though I were dumb, yet his proceedings teach thee.
O learn to love ; the lesson is but plain,
And, once made perfect, never lost again."

" I know not love," quoth he, " nor will not know it,
Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it :
'T is much to borrow, and I will not owe it ;
My love to love is love but to disgrace it ;
For I have heard it is a life in death,
That laughs, and weeps, and all but with a breath.

" Who wears a garment shapeless and unfinish'd ?
Who plucks the bud before one leaf put forth ?
If springing things be any jot diminish'd,
They wither in their prime, prove nothing worth :
The colt that 's back'd and burthen'd being young
Loseth his pride, and never waxeth strong.

"You hurt my hand with wringing; let us part,
And leave this idle theme, this bootless chat:
Remove your siege from my unyielding heart;
To love's alarm it will not ope the gate.

Dismiss your vows, your feigned tears, your flattery;
For where a heart is hard, they make no battery."

"What! canst thou talk," quoth she, "hast thou a tongue?"

O would thou hadst not, or I had no hearing!
Thy mermaid's voice ^a hath done me double wrong;
I had my load before, now press'd with bearing:
Melodious discord, heavenly tune harsh sounding,
Ear's deep-sweet music, and heart's deep-sore wound-
ing.

"Had I no eyes, but ears, my ears would love
That inward beauty and invisible;
Or, were I deaf, thy outward parts would move
Each part in me that were but sensible:
Though neither eyes nor ears, to hear nor see,
Yet should I be in love, by touching thee.

"Say, that the sense of feeling were bereft me,
And that I could not see, nor hear, nor touch,
And nothing but the very smell were left me,
Yet would my love to thee be still as much;
For from the still'tory of thy face excelling
Comes breath perfum'd, that breedeth love by
smelling.

"But O, what banquet wert thou to the taste,
Being nurse and feeder of the other four!
Would they not wish the feast might ever last,
And bid Suspicion double-lock the door?"

^a *Mermaid's voice.* *Mermaid* and *syren* were formerly used as synonymous.

Lest Jealousy, that sour unwelcome guest,
Should, by his stealing in, disturb the feast."

Once more the ruby-colour'd portal open'd,
Which to his speech did honey passage yield ;
Like a red morn, that ever yet betoken'd
Wreck to the seaman, tempest to the field,
Sorrow to shepherds, woe unto the birds,
Gusts and foul flaws^a to herdmen and to herds.

This ill presage advisedly she marketh :
Even as the wind is hush'd before it raineth,
Or as the wolf doth grin before he barketh,
Or as the berry breaks before it staineth,
Or like the deadly bullet of a gun,
His meaning struck her ere his words begun.

And at his look she flatly falleth down,
For looks kill love, and love by looks reviveth :
A smile recures the wounding of a frown,
But blessed bankrupt, that by love so thriveth !
The silly boy, believing she is dead,
Claps her pale cheek, till clapping makes it red ;

And all-amaz'd brake off his late intent,
For sharply he did think to reprehend her,
Which cunning love did wittily prevent :
Fair fall the wit that can so well defend her !
For on the grass she lies as she were slain,
Till his breath breatheth life in her again.

He wrings her nose, he strikes her on the cheeks,
He bends her fingers, holds her pulses hard ;
He chafes her lips, a thousand ways he seeks
To mend the hurt that his unkindness marr'd ;
He kisses her ; and she, by her good will,
Will never rise so he will kiss her still.

^a *Flaws* is here used in the sense of violent blasts.

The night of sorrow now is turn'd to day :
 Her two blue windows ^a faintly she upheaveth,
 Like the fair sun, when in his fresh array
 He cheers the morn, and all the world relieveth :
 And as the bright sun glorifies the sky,
 So is her face illumin'd with her eye ;

Whose beams upon his hairless face are fix'd,
 As if from thence they borrow'd all their shine.
 Were never four such lamps together mix'd,
 Had not his clouded with his brows' repine ;^b
 But hers, which thro' the crystal tears gave light,
 Shone like the moon in water seen by night.

"O, where am I?" quoth she, "in earth or heaven,
 Or in the ocean drench'd, or in the fire?
 What hour is this? or morn or weary even?
 Do I delight to die, or life desire?
 But now I liv'd, and life was death's annoy ;
 But now I died, and death was lively joy.

"O thou didst kill me;—kill me once again :
 Thy eyes' shrewd tutor, that hard heart of thine,
 Hath taught them scornful tricks, and such disdain
 That they have murder'd this poor heart of mine ;
 And these mine eyes, true leaders to their queen,
 But for thy piteous lips no more had seen.

"Long may they kiss each other, for this cure !
 O never let their crimson liveries wear !

^a The windows are doubtless the eyelids, but the epithet blue is somewhat startling. We must remember that Shakspeare has described violets as—

"Sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes."

^b *Repine*. Used as a substantive. Chaucer employs *pine* in the same manner.

And as they last, their verdure still endure,
 To drive infection^a from the dangerous year!
 That the star-gazers, having writ on death,
 May say the plague is banish'd by thy breath.

"Pure lips, sweet seals in my soft lips imprinted,
 What bargains may I make, still to be sealing?
 To sell myself I can be well contented,
 So thou wilt buy, and pay, and use good dealing;
 Which purchase if thou make, for fear of slips,
 Set thy seal-manual on my wax-red lips.

"A thousand kisses buys my heart from me;
 And pay them at thy leisure, one by one.
 What is ten hundred touches unto thee?
 Are they not quickly told, and quickly gone?
 Say, for non-payment that the debt should double,
 Is twenty hundred kisses such a trouble?"

"Fair queen," quoth he, "if any love you owe me,
 Measure my strangeness^c with my unripe years;
 Before I know myself seek not to know me;
 No fisher but the ungrown fry forbears:
 The mellow plum doth fall, the green sticks fast,
 Or being early pluck'd is sour to taste.

"Look, the world's comforter, with weary gait,
 His day's hot task hath ended in the west:
 The owl, night's herald, shrieks,—'t is very late;
 The sheep are gone to fold, birds to their nest;

^a The custom of strewing houses with fragrant herbs was universal at a period when the constant recurrence of the plague habituated families to the use of what they considered preventives.

^b Here is one of the many traces of Shakspere's legal studies—an allusion to the penalty for non-payment which formed the condition of a money bond.

^c *Strangeness*—coyness or bashfulness.

And coal-black clouds that shadow heaven's light
Do summon us to part, and bid good night.

"Now let me say 'good night,' and so say you ;
If you will say so, you shall have a kiss."
"Good night," quoth she ; and, ere he says "adien,"
The honey fee of parting tender'd is :

Her arms do lend his neck a sweet embrace ;
Incorporate then they seem ; face grows to face.

Till, breathless, he disjoin'd, and backward drew
The heavenly moisture, that sweet coral mouth,
Whose precious taste her thirsty lips well knew,
Whereon they surfeit yet complain on drouth :
He with her plenty press'd, she faint with dearth,
(Their lips together glued,) fall to the earth.

Now quick Desire hath caught the yielding prey,
And glutton-like she feeds yet never filleth ;
Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,
Paying what ransom the insulter willeth ;
Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so high,
That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry.

And having felt the sweetness of the spoil,
With blindfold fury she begins to forage ;
Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,
And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage ;
Planting oblivion, beating reason back,
Forgetting shame's pure blush, and honour's wrack.

Hot, faint, and weary, with her hard embracing,
Like a wild bird being tam'd with too much handling,
Or as the fleet-foot roe that 's tir'd with chasing,
Or like the froward infant still'd with dandling,
He now obeys, and now no more resisteth,
While she takes all she can, not all she listeth.

What wax so frozen but dissolves with tempering,
 And yields at last to every light impression ?^a
 Things out of hope are compass'd oft with venturing,
 Chiefly in love, whose leave^b exceeds commission :
 Affection faints not like a pale-fac'd coward,
 But then woos best when most his choice is froward.

When he did frown, O, had she then gave over,
 Such nectar from his lips she had not suck'd.
 Foul words and frowns must not repel a lover ;
 What though the rose have prickles, yet 't is pluck'd :
 Were beauty under twenty locks kept fast
 Yet love breaks through, and picks them all at last.

For pity now she can no more detain him ;
 The poor fool prays her that he may depart :
 She is resolv'd no longer to restrain him ;
 Bids him farewell, and look well to her heart,
 The which, by Cupid's bow she doth protest,
 He carries thence incaged in his breast.

"Sweet boy," she says, "this night I'll waste in sorrow,
 For my sick heart commands mine eyes to watch.
 Tell me, love's master, shall we meet to-morrow ?
 Say, shall we ? shall we ? wilt thou make the match ?"
 He tells her, no ; to-morrow he intends
 To hunt the boar with certain of his friends.

"The boar !" quoth she ; whereat a sudden pale,
 Like lawn being spread upon the blushing rose,
 Usurps her cheeks ; she trembles at his tale,
 And on his neck her yoking arms she throws :
 She sinketh down, still hanging by his neck,
 He on her belly falls, she on her back.

^a The soft wax upon which the seal attached to a legal instrument was impressed required to be tempered before the impression was made upon it.

^b Leave—licence.

Now is she in the very lists of love,
 Her champion mounted for the hot encounter :
 He is imaginary she doth prove,
 He will not manage her, although he mount her ;
 That worse than Tantalus^a is her annoy,
 To clip Elysium, and to lack her joy.

Even as poor birds, deceiv'd with painted grapes,^a
 Do surfeit by the eye, and pine the maw,
 Even so she languisheth in her mishaps,
 As those poor birds that helpless^b berries saw :
 The warm effects which she in him finds missing,
 She seeks to kindle with continual kissing.

But all in vain ; good queen, it will not be :
 She hath assay'd as much as may be prov'd ;
 Her pleading hath deserv'd a greater fee ;
 She 's Love, she loves, and yet she is not lov'd.
 " Fie, fie," he says, " you crush me ; let me go ;
 You have no reason to withhold me so."

" Thou hadst been gone," quoth she, " sweet boy, ere this,
 But that thou told'st me thou wouldst hunt the boar.
 O be advis'd ! thou know'st not what it is
 With javelin's point a churlish swine to gore,
 Whose tushes never-sheath'd he whetteth still,
 Like to a mortal^c butcher, bent to kill.

" On his bow-back he hath a battle set
 Of bristly pikes, that ever threat his foes ;
 His eyes like glowworms shine when he doth fret :
 His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes ;

^a The allusion is to the picture of Zeuxis, mentioned by Pliny. We may observe that there was no English translation of Pliny so early as the date of this poem.

^b *Helpless*—that afford no help.

^c *Mortal*—deadly.

Being mov'd, he strikes whate'er is in his way,
And whom he strikes his cruel tushes slay.

" His brawny sides, with hairy bristles arm'd,
Are better proof than thy spear's point can enter;
His short thick neck cannot be easily harm'd;
Being ireful on the lion he will venture :
The thorny brambles and embracing bushes,
As fearful of him, part ; through whom he rushes.

" Alas, he nought esteems that face of thine,
To which Love's eyes pay tributary gazes ;
Nor thy soft hands, sweet lips, and crystal eyne,
Whose full perfection all the world amazes ;
But having thee at vantage (wondrous dread !)
Would root these beauties as he roots the mead.

" O, let him keep his loathsome cabin still !
Beauty hath nought to do with such foul fiends :
Come not within his danger^a by thy will ;
They that thrive well take counsel of their friends.
When thou didst name the boar, not to dissemble,
I fear'd thy fortune, and my joints did tremble.

" Didst thou not mark my face ? Was it not white ?
Saw'st thou not signs of fear lurk in mine eye ?
Grew I not faint ? And fell I not downright ?
Within my bosom, whereon thou dost lie,
My boding heart pants, beats, and takes no rest,
But, like an earthquake, shakes thee on my breast.

" For where Love reigns, disturbing Jealousy
Doth call himself Affection's sentinel ;
Gives false alarms, suggesteth mutiny,
And in a peaceful hour doth cry, ' kill, kill ;'

^a *Danger*—power of doing harm.

Distempering gentle Love in his desire,
As air and water do abate the fire.

" This sour informer, this bate-breeding^a spy,
This canker that eats up love's tender spring,^b
This carry-tale, dissentious jealousy,
That sometime true news, sometime false doth bring,
Knocks at my heart, and whispers in mine ear,
That if I love thee I thy death should fear :

" And, more than so, presenteth to mine eye
The picture of an angry-chafing boar,
Under whose sharp fangs on his back doth lie
An image like thyself, all stain'd with gore ;
Whose blood upon the fresh flowers being shed
Doth make them droop with grief, and hang the head.

" What should I do, seeing thee so indeed,
That tremble at the imagination ?
The thought of it doth make my faint heart bleed,
And fear doth teach it divination :
I prophesy thy death, my living sorrow,
If thou encounter with the boar to-morrow.

" But if thou needs wilt hunt, be rul'd by me ;
Uncouple at the timorous flying hare,
Or at the fox, which lives by subtilty,
Or at the roe, which no encounter dare :
Pursue these fearful creatures o'er the downs,
And on thy well-breath'd horse keep with thy hounds.

" And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,
Mark the poor wretch, to overshoot his troubles,
How he outruns the wind, and with what care
He cranks^c and crosses, with a thousand doubles :

^a Bate signifies strife.

^b Spring—bud or young shoot.

^c Cranks—winds.

The many musits^a through the which he goes
Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes.

“ Sometime he runs among a flock of sheep,
To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,
And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,^b
To stop the loud pursuers in their yell ;
And sometime sorteth^c with a herd of deer ;
Danger deviseth shifts ; wit waits on fear :

“ For there his smell with others being mingled,
The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,
Ceasing their clamorous cry till they have singled
With much ado the cold fault cleanly out ;
Then do they spend their mouths : Echo replies,
As if another chase were in the skies.

“ By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,
To hearken if his foes pursue him still ;
Anon their loud alarums he doth hear ;
And now his grief may be compared well
To one sore sick that hears the passing-bell.

“ Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
Turn, and return, indenting with the way ;
Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,
Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay :
For misery is trodden on by many,
And being low never reliev'd by any.

“ Lie quietly, and hear a little more ;
Nay, do not struggle, for thou shalt not rise :

^a *Musits*.—The term is explained in Markham's 'Gentlemen's Academy,' 1595 :—"We term the place where she [the hare] sitteth, her form ; the place through which she goes to relief, her musit."

^b *Keep*—dwell.

^c *Sorteth*—consorteth.

To make thee hate the hunting of the boar,
 Unlike myself thou hear'st me moralize,^a
 Applying this to that, and so to so ;
 For love can comment upon every woe.

“ Where did I leave ? ” — “ No matter where,” quoth
 he ;

“ Leave me, and then the story aptly ends :
 The night is spent.” — “ Why, what of that ? ” quoth she.
 “ I am,” quoth he, “ expected of my friends ;
 And now 't is dark, and going I shall fall.”
 “ In night,” quoth she, “ desire sees best of all.

“ But if thou fall, O then imagine this,
 The earth in love with thee thy footing trips,
 And all is but to rob thee of a kiss.
 Rich preys make true men thieves ; so do thy lips
 Make modest Dian cloudy and forlorn,
 Lest she should steal a kiss, and die forsworn.

“ Now of this dark night I perceive the reason :
 Cynthia for shame obscures her silver shine,
 Till forging nature be condemn'd of treason,
 For stealing moulds from heaven that were divine,
 Wherein she fram'd thee in high heaven's despite,
 To shame the sun by day, and her by night.

“ And therefore hath she brib'd the Destinies,
 To cross the curious workmanship of nature,
 To mingle beauty with infirmities,
 And pure perfection with impure defeature ;
 Making it subject to the tyranny
 Of mad mischances and much misery ;

“ As burning fevers, agues pale and faint,
 Life-poisoning pestilence, and frenzies wood,^b

^a *Moralize*—comment.

^b *Wood*--mad.

The marrow-eating sickness, whose attaint
Disorder breeds by heating of the blood :
 Surfeits, imposthumes, grief, and damn'd despair,
 Swear Nature's death for framing thee so fair.

“ And not the least of all these maladies,
But in one minute's fight brings beauty under :
Both favour, savour, hue, and qualities,
Whereat the impartial gazer late did wonder,
 Are on the sudden wasted, thaw'd, and done,^a
 As mountain-snow melts with the midday sun.

“ Therefore, despite of fruitless chastity,
Love-lacking vestals, and self-loving nuns,
That on the earth would breed a scarcity
And barren dearth of daughters and of sons,
 Be prodigal : the lamp that burns by night
 Dries up his oil to lend the world his light.

“ What is thy body but a swallowing grave,
Seeming to bury that posterity
Which by the rights of time thou needs must have,
If thou destroy them not in dark obscurity ?
 If so, the world will hold thee in disdain,
 Sith in thy pride so fair a hope is slain.

“ So in thyself thyself art made away ;
A mischief worse than civil home-bred strife,
Or theirs whose desperate hands themselves do slay,
Or butcher-sire, that reaves his son of life.
 Foul cankering rust the hidden treasure frets,
 But gold that 's put to use more gold begets.”

“ Nay, then,” quoth Adon, “ you will fall again
Into your idle over-handled theme ;

^a *Done*—destroyed.

The kiss I gave you is bestow'd in vain,
And all in vain you strive against the stream ;
For by this black-fac'd night, desire's foul nurse,
Your treatise makes me like you worse and worse.

" If love have lent you twenty thousand tongues,
And every tongue more moving than your own,
Bewitching like the wanton mermaid's songs,
Yet from mine ear the tempting tune is blown ;
For know, my heart stands armed in mine ear,
And will not let a false sound enter there ;

" Lest the deceiving harmony should run
Into the quiet closure of my breast ;
And then my little heart were quite undone,
In his bedchamber to be barr'd of rest.
No, lady, no ; my heart longs not to groan,
But soundly sleeps, while now it sleeps alone.

" What have you urg'd that I cannot reprove ?
The path is smooth that leadeth on to danger ;
I hate not love, but your device in love,
That lends embracements unto every stranger.
You do it for increase ; O strange excuse !
When reason is the bawd to lust's abuse.

" Call it not love, for love to heaven is fled,
Since sweating lust on earth usurp'd his name ;
Under whose simple semblance he hath fed
Upon fresh beauty, blotting it with blame ;
Which the hot tyrant stains, and soon bereaves,
As caterpillars do the tender leaves.

" Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,
But lust's effect is tempest after sun ;
Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain,
Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done.

Love surfeits not ; lust like a glutton dies :
 Love is all truth ; lust full of forged lies.

“ More I could tell, but more I dare not say ;
 The text is old, the orator too green.
 Therefore, in sadness, now I will away ;
 My face is full of shame, my heart of teen ;^a
 Mine ears that to your wanton talk attended
 Do burn themselves for having so offended.”

With this he breaketh from the sweet embrace
 Of those fair arms which bound him to her breast,
 And homeward through the dark laund^b runs apac
 Leaves Love upon her back deeply distress'd.
 Look how a bright star shooteth from the sky,
 So glides he in the night from Venus' eye ;

Which after him she darts, as one on shore
 Gazing upon a late-embarked friend,
 Till the wild waves will have him seen no more,
 Whose ridges with the meeting clouds contend ;
 So did the merciless and pitchy night
 Fold in the object that did feed her sight.

Whereat amaz'd, as one that unaware
 Hath dropp'd a precious jewel in the flood,
 Or 'stonish'd as night-wanderers often are,
 Their light blown out in some mistrustful wood ;
 Even so confounded in the dark she lay,
 Having lost the fair discovery of her way.

And now she beats her heart, whereat it groans,
 That all the neighbour-caves, as seeming troubled,
 Make verbal repetition of her moans ;
 Passion on passion deeply is redoubled :

^a Teen—grief.

^b Laund—lawn.

"Ah me!" she cries, and twenty times, "woe, woe!"
And twenty echoes twenty times cry so.

She, marking them, begins a wailing note,
And sings extemp'rally a woeful ditty;
How love makes young men thrall, and old men
dote;
How love is wise in folly, foolish-witty:
Her heavy anthem still concludes in woe,
And still the choir of echoes answer ^a so.

Her song was tedious, and outwore the night,
For lovers' hours are long, though seeming short:
If pleas'd themselves, others, they think, delight
In such like circumstance, with such like sport:
Their copious stories, oftentimes begun,
End without audience, and are never done.

For who hath she to spend the night withal,
But idle sounds, resembling parasites,
Like shrill-tongued tapsters answering every call,
Soothing the humour of fantastic wits?
She says, "'t is so:" they answer all, "'t is so;"
And would say after her, if she said "no."

Lo! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
The sun ariseth in his majesty;
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
The cedar-tops and hills seem burnish'd gold.

Venus salutes him with this fair good-morrow:
"O thou clear god, and patron of all light,

^a *Answer.* So the original. No doubt, according to the rules of modern construction, answers is more correct.

From whom each lamp and shining star doth borrow
The beauteous influence that makes him bright,
There lives a son, that suck'd an earthly mother,
May lend thee light, as thou dost lend to other."

This said, she hasteth to a myrtle grove,
Musing the morning is so much o'erworn,
And yet she hears no tidings of her love :
She hearkens for his hounds, and for his horn :
Anon she hears them chant it lustily,
And all in haste she coasteth^a to the cry.

And as she runs, the bushes in the way
Some catch her by the neck, some kiss her face,
Some twine about her thigh to make her stay ;
She wildly breaketh from their strict embrace,
Like a milch doe, whose swelling dugs do ache,
Hasting to feed her fawn, hid in some brake.

By this she hears the hounds are at a bay,
Whereat she starts, like one that spies an adder
Wreath'd up in fatal folds, just in his way,
The fear whereof doth make him shake and shudder ;
Even so the timorous yelping of the hounds
Appals her senses, and her spright confounds.

For now she knows it is no gentle chase,
But the blunt boar, rough bear, or lion proud,
Because the cry remaineth in one place,
Where fearfully the dogs exclaim aloud :
Finding their enemy to be so curst,
They all strain court'sy who shall cope him first.

This dismal cry rings sadly in her ear,
Through which it enters to surprise her heart,

^a *Coasteth*—advanceth.

VENUS AND ADONIS.

Who, overcome by doubt and bloodless fear,
With cold-pale weakness numbs each feeling part :
Like soldiers, when their captain once doth yield,
They basely fly, and dare not stay the field.

Thus stands she in a trembling ecstasy ;
Till, cheering up her senses sore-dismay'd,
She tells them 't is a causeless fantasy,
And childish error that they are afraid ;
Bids them leave quaking, bids them fear no more ;—
And with that word she spied the hunted boar ;

Whose frothy mouth, bepainted all with red,
Like milk and blood being mingled both together,
A second fear through all her sinews spread,
Which madly hurries her she knows not whither :
This way she runs, and now she will no further,
But back retires, to rate the boar for murder.

A thousand spleens bear her a thousand ways ;
She treads the path that she untreads again ;
Her more than haste is mated ^a with delays,
Like the proceedings of a drunken brain,
Full of respect, ^b yet nought at all respecting,
In hand with all things, nought at all effecting.

Here kennell'd in a brake she finds a hound,
And asks the weary caitiff for his master ;
And there another licking of his wound,
'Gainst venom'd sores the only sovereign plaster ;
And here she meets another sadly scowling,
To whom she speaks, and he replies with howling.

When he hath ceas'd his ill-resounding noise,
Another flap-mouth'd mourner, black and grim,

^a *Mated*—confounded.

^b *Respect*—circumspection.

Against the welkin volleys out his voice ;
Another and another answer him,
 Clapping their proud tails to the ground below,
 Shaking their scratch'd ears, bleeding as they go.

Look, how the world's poor people are amaz'd
At apparitions, signs, and prodigies,
Whereon with fearful eyes they long have gaz'd,
Infusing them with dreadful prophecies :
 So she at these sad signs draws up her breath,
 And, sighing it again, exclaims on Death.

" Hard-favour'd tyrant, ugly, meagre, lean,
Hateful divorce of love," (thus chides she Death,)
" Grim-grinning ghost, earth's worm, what dost thou
 mean
To stifle beauty, and to steal his breath,
 Who when he liv'd, his breath and beauty set
 Gloss on the rose, smell to the violet ?

" If he be dead,—O no, it cannot be,
Seeing his beauty, thou shouldst strike at it—
O yes, it may ; thou hast no eyes to see,
But hatefully at random dost thou hit.
 Thy mark is feeble age ; but thy false dart
 Mistakes that aim, and cleaves an infant's heart.

" Hadst thou but bid beware, then he had spoke,
And hearing him thy power had lost his ^a power.
The Destinies will curse thee for this stroke ;
They bid thee crop a weed, thou pluck'st a flower :
 Love's golden arrow at him should have fled,
 And not Death's ebon dart, to strike him dead.

" Dost thou drink tears, that thou provok'st such weeping ?
What may a heavy groan advantage thee ?

^a *His for its.*

Why hast thou cast into eternal sleeping
 Those eyes that taught all other eyes to see?
 Now Nature cares not for thy mortal vigour,
 Since her best work is ruin'd with thy rigour.

Here overcome, as one full of despair,
 She vail'd^a her eyelids, who, like sluices, stopp'd
 The crystal tide that from her two cheeks fair
 In the sweet channel of her bosom dropp'd;
 But through the floodgates breaks the silver rain,
 And with his strong course opens them again.

O how her eyes and tears did lend and borrow!
 Her eyes seen in the tears, tears in her eye;
 Both crystals, where they view'd each other's sorrow,
 Sorrow, that friendly sighs sought still to dry;
 But like a stormy day, now wind, now rain,
 Sighs dry her cheeks, tears make them wet again.

Variable passions throng her constant woe,
 As striving who should best become her grief;
 All entertain'd, each passion labours so
 That every present sorrow seemeth chief,
 But none is best; then join they all together,
 Like many clouds consulting for foul weather.

By this, far off she hears some huntsmen hollo:^b
 A nurse's song ne'er pleas'd her babe so well:
 The dire imagination she did follow
 This sound of hope doth labour to expel;
 For now reviving joy bids her rejoice,
 And flatters her it is Adonis' voice.

^a *Vail'd*—lowered.

^b *Hollo*, or hollow, is not quite the same word as holla, which we have already noticed, although the usual spelling of this word in the passage before us is holla.

Whereat her tears began to turn their tide,
Being prison'd in her eye, like pearls in glass;
Yet sometimes falls an orient drop beside,
Which her cheek melts, as scorning it should pass,
To wash the foul face of the sluttish ground,
Who is but drunken when she seemeth drown'd.

O hard-believing love, how strange it seems
Not to believe, and yet too credulous!
Thy weal and woe are both of them extremes,
Despair and hope make thee ridiculous:
The one doth flatter thee in thoughts unlikely,
In likely thoughts the other kills thee quickly.

Now she unweaves the web that she hath wrought,
Adonis lives, and Death is not to blame;
It was not she that call'd him all-to^a naught;
Now she adds honours to his hateful name;
She clepes him king of graves, and grave for kings,
Imperious supreme of all mortal things.

"No, no," quoth she, "sweet Death, I did but jest;
Yet pardon me, I felt a kind of fear,
Whenas I met the boar, that bloody beast,
Which knows no pity, but is still severe;
Then, gentle shadow (truth I must confess),
I rail'd on thee, fearing my love's decease.

"'T is not my fault: the boar provok'd my tongue,
Be wreak'd on him, invisible commander;
'T is he, foul creature, that hath done thee wrong;
I did but act, he's author of thy slander:
Grief hath two tongues, and never woman yet,
Could rule them both, without ten women's wit."

^a *All-to—entirely—altogether.*

VENUS AND ADONIS.

Thus, hoping that Adonis is alive,
Her rash suspect she doth extenuate ;
And that his beauty may the better thrive,
With Death she humbly doth insinuate ;
Tells him of trophies, statues, tombs ; and stories
His victories, his triumphs, and his glories.

" O Jove," quoth she, " how much a fool was I,
To be of such a weak and silly mind,
To wail his death who lives, and must not die,
Till mutual overthrow of mortal kind !
For he being dead, with him is beauty slain,
And, beauty dead, black chaos comes again.

" Fie, fie, fond love, thou art so full of fear
As one with treasure laden, hemm'd with thieves ;
Trifles, unwitnessed with eye or ear,
Thy coward heart with false bethinking grieves."
Even at this word she hears a merry horn,
Whereat she leaps that was but late forlorn.

As falcon to the lure away she flies ;
The grass stoops not, she treads on it so light ;
And in her haste unfortunately spies
The foul boar's conquest on her fair delight ;
Which seen, her eyes, as murder'd with the view,
Like stars asham'd of day, themselves withdrew.

Or, as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,
And there, all smother'd up, in shade doth sit,
Long after fearing to creep forth again ;
So, at his bloody view, her eyes are fled
Into the deep dark cabins of her head ;

Where they resign their office and their light
To the disposing of her troubled brain ;

Who bids them still consort with ugly night,
And never wound the heart with looks again ;
 Who, like a king perplexed in his throne,
 By their suggestion gives a deadly groan,

Whereat each tributary subject quakes :
As when the wind, imprison'd in the ground,
Struggling for passage, earth's foundation shakes,
Which with cold terror doth men's minds confound,
 The mutiny each part doth so surprise,
 That from their dark beds once more leap her eyes ;

And, being open'd, threw unwilling light
Upon the wide wound that the boar had trench'd
In his soft flank ; whose wonted lily white
With purple tears, that his wound wept, was drench'd :
 No flower was nigh, no grass, herb, leaf, or weed,
 But stole his blood, and seem'd with him to bleed.

This solemn sympathy poor Venus noteth ;
Over one shoulder doth she hang her head ;
Dumbly she passions, frantically she doteth ;
She thinks he could not die, he is not dead.
 Her voice is stopp'd, her joints forget to bow ;
 Her eyes are mad that they have wept till now.

Upon his hurt she looks so steadfastly
That her sight dazzling makes the wound seem three ;
And then she reprehends her mangling eye
That makes more gashes where no breach should be :
 His face seems twain, each several limb is doubled ;
 For oft the eye mistakes, the brain being troubled.

“ My tongue cannot express my grief for one,
And yet,” quoth she, “ behold two Adons dead !
My sighs are blown away, my salt tears gone,
Mine eyes are turn'd to fire, my heart to lead :

Heavy heart's lead melt at mine eyes' red fire !
So shall I die by drops of hot desire.

" Alas, poor world, what treasure hast thou lost !
What face remains alive that 's worth the viewing ?
Whose tongue is music now ? what canst thou boast
Of things long since, or anything ensuing ?
The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh and trim ;
But true-sweet beauty liv'd and died with him.

" Bonnet nor veil henceforth no creature wear !
Nor sun nor wind will ever strive to kiss you :
Having no fair^a to lose, you need not fear ;
The sun doth scorn you, and the wind doth hiss you :
But when Adonis liv'd, sun and sharp air
Lurk'd like two thieves to rob him of his fair ;

" And therefore would he put his bonnet on,
Under whose brim the gaudy sun would peep ;
The wind would blow it off, and, being gone,
Play with his locks ; then would Adonis weep :
And straight, in pity of his tender years,
They both would strive who first should dry his tears.

" To see his face the lion walk'd along
Behind some hedge, because he would not fear him :
To recreate himself, when he bath sung,
The tiger would be tame and gently hear him :
If he had spoke the wolf would leave his prey,
And never fright the silly lamb that day.

" When he beheld his shadow in the brook
The fishes spread on it their golden gills ;
When he was by the birds such pleasure took
That some would sing, some other in their bills

^a Fair—beauty.

Would bring him mulberries, and ripe-red cherries;
He fed them with his sight, they him with berries.

"But this foul, grim, and urchin-snouted* boar,
Whose downward eye still looketh for a grave,
Ne'er saw the beauteous livery that he wore:
Witness the entertainment that he gave;
If he did see his face, why then I know
He thought to kiss him, and hath kill'd him so.

"'T is true, 't is true; thus was Adonis slain;
He ran upon the boar with his sharp spear,
Who did not whet his teeth at him again,
But by a kiss thought to persuade him there;
And nuzzling in his flank the loving swine
Sheath'd, unaware, the tusk in his soft groin.

"Had I been tooth'd like him I must confess
With kissing him I should have kill'd him first;
But he is dead, and never did he bless
My youth with his; the more am I accurst."
With this she falleth in the place she stood,
And stains her face with his congealed blood.

She looks upon his lips, and they are pale;
She takes him by the hand, and that is cold;
She whispers in his ears a heavy tale,
As if they heard the woeful words she told:
She lifts the coffer-lids that close his eyes,
Where, lo! two lamps, burnt out, in darkness lies.

Two glasses where herself herself beheld
A thousand times, and now no more reflect;
Their virtue lost, wherein they late excell'd,
And every beauty robb'd of his effect:

* *Urchin-snouted*—with the snout of the urchin, or hedge-hog.

VENUS AND ADONIS.

"Wonder of time," quoth she, "this is my spite,
That you being dead the day should yet be light.

"Since thou art dead, lo! here I prophesy,
Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend;
It shall be waited on with jealousy,
Find sweet beginning, but unsavoury end;
Ne'er settled equally, but high or low;
That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe.

"It shall be fickle, false, and full of fraud;
Bud and be blasted in a breathing while;
The bottom poison, and the top o'erstraw'd^a
With sweets that shall the truest sight beguile:
The strongest body shall it make most weak,
Strike the wise dumb, and teach the fool to speak.

"It shall be sparing, and too full of riot,
Teaching decrepit age to tread the measures;^b
The staring ruffian shall it keep in quiet,
Pluck down the rich, enrich the poor with treasures:
It shall be raging mad, and silly mild,
Make the young old, the old become a child.

"It shall suspect where is no cause of fear;
It shall not fear where it should most mistrust;
It shall be merciful, and too severe,
And most deceiving when it seems most just;
Perverse it shall be where it shows most toward,
Put fear to valour, courage to the coward.

"It shall be cause of war and dire events,
And set dissention 'twixt the son and sire;
Subject and servile to all discontents,
As dry combustious matter is to fire;
Sith in his prime death doth my love destroy,
They that love best their loves shall not enjoy."

^a *O'erstraw'd*—o'erstrewn.

^b *Measures*—grave dances suited to age.

By this, the boy that by her side lay kill'd
Was melted like a vapour from her sight,
And in his blood that on the ground lay spill'd,
A purple flower sprung up, chequer'd with white,
 Resembling well his pale cheeks, and the blood
 Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood.

She bows her head, the new sprung flower to smell,
Comparing it to her Adonis' breath;
And says, within her bosom it shall dwell,
Since he himself is reft from her by death:
 She crops the stalk, and in the breach appears
 Green dropping sap, which she compares to tears.

"Poor flower," quoth she, "this was thy father's guise,
(Sweet issue of a more sweet smelling sire,)
For every little grief to wet his eyes:
To grow unto himself was his desire,
 And so 't is thine; but know, it is as good
 To wither in my breast as in his blood.

"Here was thy father's bed, here in my breast;
Thou art the next of blood, and 't is thy right:
Lo! in this hollow cradle take thy rest,
My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and night:
 There shall not be one minute in an hour
 Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's flower."

Thus weary of the world, away she lies,
And yokes her silver doves; by whose swift aid
Their mistress mounted, through the empty skies
In her light chariot quickly is convey'd,
Holding their course to Paphos, where their queen
Means to immure herself, and not be seen.

End of
Venus and Adonis.





TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY WRIOTHESLEY,
EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON, AND BARON OF TITCHFIELD.

THE love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end, whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety.* The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater my duty would show greater: meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship; to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.

Your Lordship's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

* *Moiety*. In 'Henry IV.,' Part I., and in 'Lear,' Shakspeare uses *moiety* as it is here used, meaning a portion, not a half.

THE ARGUMENT.

LUCIUS TARQUINIUS (for his excessive pride surnamed *Superbus*), after he had caused his own father-in-law, *Servius Tullius*, to be cruelly murdered, and, contrary to the Roman laws and customs, not requiring or staying for the people's suffrages, had possessed himself of the kingdom, went, accompanied with his sons and other noblemen of Rome, to besiege *Ardea*. During which siege the principal men of the army meeting one evening at the tent of *Sextus Tarquinius*, the king's son, in their discourses after supper, every one commended the virtues of his own wife; among whom, *Collatinus* extolled the incomparable chastity of his wife *Lucretia*. In that pleasant humour they all posted to Rome; and intending by their secret and sudden arrival to make trial of that which every one had before avouched, only *Collatinus* finds his wife (though it were late in the night) spinning amongst her maids: the other ladies were all found dancing and reveling, or in several disports. Whereupon the noblemen yielded *Collatinus* the victory, and his wife the fame. At that time *Sextus Tarquinius*, being inflamed with *Lucrece's* beauty, yet smothering his passions for the present, departed with the rest back to the camp; from whence he shortly after privily withdrew himself, and was (according to his estate) royally entertained and lodged by *Lucrece* at *Collatium*. The same night he treacherously stealeth into her chamber, violently ravished her, and early in the morning speedeth away. *Lucrece*, in this lamentable plight, hastily despatcheth messengers, one to Rome for her father, another to the camp for *Collatine*. They came, the one accompanied with *Junius Brutus*, the other with *Publius Valerius*; and finding *Lucrece* attired in mourning habit, demanded the cause of her sorrow. She, first taking an oath of them for her revenge, revealed the actor, and whole manner of his dealing, and withal suddenly stabbed herself. Which done, with one consent they all vowed to root out the whole hated family of the *Tarquins*; and, bearing the dead body to Rome, *Brutus* acquainted the people with the doer and manner of the vile deed, with a bitter invective against the tyranny of the king: wherewith the people were so moved, that with one consent and a general acclamation the *Tarquins* were all exiled, and the state government changed from kings to consuls.

THE RAPE OF LUCRECE.

FROM the besieged Ardea all in post,
Borne by the trustless wings of false desire,
Lust-breathed Tarquin leaves the Roman host,
And to Collatium bears the lightless fire
Which, in pale embers hid, lurks to aspire,
And girdle with embracing flames the waist
Of Collatine's fair love, Lucrece the chaste.

Haply that name of chaste unhapp'ly set
This bateless edge on his keen appetite ;
When Collatine unwisely did not let ^a
To praise the clear unmatched red and white
Which triumph'd in that sky of his delight,
Where mortal stars, as bright as heaven's beauties,
With pure aspects did him peculiar duties.

For he the night before, in Tarquin's tent,
Unlock'd the treasure of his happy state ;
What priceless wealth the heavens had him lent
In the possession of his beauteous mate ;
Reckoning his fortune at such high-proud rate,
That kings might be espoused to more fame,
But king nor peer to such a peerless dame.

O happiness enjoy'd but of a few !
And, if possess'd, as soon decay'd and done ^b
As is the morning's silver-melting dew

^a *Let*—forbear.

^b *Done*. The word is here used as in a previous passage of
the 'Venus and Adonis':—

“ Wasted, thaw'd, and *dome*,
As mountain-snow melts with the midday sun.”

When beauty boasted blushes, in despite
Virtue would stain that or^a with silver white.

But beauty, in that white intitled,^b
From Venus' doves doth challenge that fair field :
Then virtue claims from beauty beauty's red,
Which virtue gave the golden age, to gild
Their silver cheeks, and call'd it then their shield ;
Teaching them thus to use it in the fight,—
When shame assail'd, the red should fence the white.

This heraldry in Lucrece' face was seen,
Argued by beauty's red, and virtue's white :
Of either's colour was the other queen,
Proving from world's minority their right :
Yet their ambition makes them still to fight ;
The sovereignty of either being so great,
That oft they interchange each other's seat.

This silent war of lilies and of roses
Which Tarquin view'd in her fair face's field,
In their pure ranks his traitor eye encloses ;
Where, lest between them both it should be kill'd,
The coward captive vanquished doth yield
To those two armies that would let him go,
Rather than triumph in so false a foe.

^a Or. The line usually stands thus :—

“ Virtue would stain that o'er with silver white.”

The original has *ore*. Malone has suggested, but he does not act upon the suggestion, that “ the word intended was perhaps *or*, i.e. gold, to which the poet compares the deep colour of a blush.” We have no doubt whatever of the matter. The lines in the subsequent stanza complete the heraldic allusion :—

“ Then virtue claims from beauty beauty's red,
Which virtue gave the golden age, to gild
Their silver cheeks, and call'd it then their shield.”

^b *Intituled*—having a title to, or in.

Now thinks he that her husband's shallow tongue
 (The niggard prodigal that prais'd her so)
 In that high task hath done her beauty wrong,
 Which far exceeds his barren skill to show :
 Therefore that praise which Collatine doth owe,^a
 Enchanted Tarquin answers with surmise,
 In silent wonder of still-gazing eyes.

This earthly saint, adored by this devil,
 Little suspecteth the false worshipper ;
 For unstain'd thoughts do seldom dream on evil ;
 Birds never lim'd no secret bushes fear :
 So guiltless she securely gives good cheer
 And reverend welcome to her princely guest,
 Whose inward ill no outward harm express'd :

For that he colour'd with his high estate,
 Hiding base sin in plaits of majesty ;
 That nothing in him seem'd inordinate,
 Save sometime too much wonder of his eye,
 Which, having all, all could not satisfy ;
 But poorly rich, so wanteth in his store
 That cloy'd with much he pineth still for more.

But she, that never cop'd with stranger eyes,
 Could pick no meaning from their parling^b locks,
 Nor read the subtle-shining secrecies
 Writ in the glassy margents of such books ;
 She touch'd no unknown baits, nor fear'd no hooks ;
 Nor could she moralize^c his wanton sight
 More than his eyes were open'd to the light.

He stories to her ears her husband's fame,
 Won in the fields of fruitful Italy ;
 And decks with praises Collatine's high name,

^a The object of praise which Collatine doth possess.

^b *Parling*—speaking.

^c *Moralize*—interpret.

Made glorious by his manly chivalry,
 With bruised arms and wreaths of victory ;
 Her joy with heav'd-up hand she doth express,
 And, wordless, so greets heaven for his success.

Far from the purpose of his coming thither,
 He makes excuses for his being there.
 No cloudy show of stormy blustering weather
 Doth yet in his fair welkin once appear ;
 Till sable Night, mother of Dread and Fear,
 Upon the world dim darkness doth display,
 And in her vaulty prison stows the day.

For then is Tarquin brought unto his bed,
 Intending ^a weariness with heavy spright ;
 For, after supper, long he questioned ^b
 With modest Lucrece, and wore out the night :
 Now leaden slumber with life's strength doth fight ;
 And every one to rest himself betakes,
 Save thieves, and cares, and troubled minds, that
 wakes.

As one of which doth Tarquin lie revolving
 The sundry dangers of his will's obtaining ;
 Yet ever to obtain his will resolving,
 Though weak-built hopes persuade him to abstaining ;
 Despair to gain doth traffic oft for gaining ;
 And when great treasure is the meed propos'd,
 Though death be adjunct, there 's no death suppos'd.

Those that much covet are with gain so fond,
 That what they have not, that which they possess
 They scatter and unloose it from their bond,^c

^a *Intending*—pretending.

^b *Questioned*—conversed.

^c The meaning, though obscurely expressed, is that the covetous are so fond of gaining what they have not, that they scatter and unloose from their bond (safe hold) that which they possess.

And so, by hoping more, they have but less ;
Or, gaining more, the profit of excess
Is but to surfeit, and such griefs sustain,
That they prove bankrupt in this poor-rich gain.

The aim of all is but to nurse the life
With honour, wealth, and ease, in waning age ;
And in this aim there is such thwarting strife,
That one for all, or all for one we gage ;
As life for honour in fell battles' rage ;
Honour for wealth ; and oft that wealth doth cost
The death of all, and all together lost.

So that in vent'ring ill we leave to be
The things we are, for that which we expect ;
And this ambitious soul infirmity,
In having much, torments us with defect
Of that we have : so then we do neglect
The thing we have, and, all for want of wit,
Make something nothing, by augmenting it.

Such hazard now must doting Tarquin make,
Pawning his honour to obtain his lust ;
And for himself himself he must forsake :
Then where is truth if there be no self-trust ?
When shall he think to find a stranger just,
When he himself himself confounds, betrays
To slanderous tongues, and wretched hateful days ?

Now stole upon the time the dead of night,
When heavy sleep had clos'd up mortal eyes ;
No comfortable star did lend his light,
No noise but owls' and wolves' death-boding cries ;
Now serves the season that they may surprise
The silly lambs ; pure thoughts are dead and
still,
While lust and murder wake to stain and kill.

And now this lustful lord leap'd from his bed,
 Throwing his mantle rudely o'er his arm ;
 Is madly toss'd between desire and dread ;
 Th' one sweetly flatters, th' other feareth harm ;
 But honest Fear, bewitch'd with lust's foul charin,
 Doth too too oft befake him to retire,
 Beaten away by brain-sick rude Desire.

His falchion on a flint he softly smiteth,
 That from the cold stone sparks of fire do fly,
 Whereat a waxen torch forthwith he lighteth,
 Which must be lode-star to his lustful eye ;
 And to the flame thus speaks advisedly :
 " As from this cold flint I enforc'd this fire,
 So Lucrece must I force to my desire."

Here pale with fear he doth premeditate
 The dangers of his loathsome enterprise,
 And in his inward mind he doth debate
 What following sorrow may on this arise ;
 Then looking scornfully, he doth despise
 His naked armour of still-slaughter'd lust,
 And justly thus controls his thoughts unjust :

" Fair torch, burn out thy light, and lend it not
 To darken her whose light excelleth thine !
 And die unhallow'd thoughts, before you blot
 With your uncleanness that which is divine !
 Offer pure incense to so pure a shrine :
 Let fair humanity abhor the deed
 That spots and stains love's modest snow-white
 weed.^a

" O shame to knighthood and to shining arms !
 O foul dishonour to my household's grave !
 O impious act, including all foul harms !

^a *Weed*—garment.

A martial man to be soft fancy's slave ;^a
True valour still a true respect should have ;
Then my digression ^b is so vile, so base,
That it will live engraven in my face.

" Yea, though I die, the scandal will survive,
And be an eyesore in my golden coat ;
Some loathsome dash the herald will contrive,
To cipher me how fondly I did dote ;
That my posterity, sham'd with the note,
Shall curse my bones, and hold it for no sin
To wish that I their father had not been.

" What win I if I gain the thing I seek ?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy :
Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week ?
Or sells eternity to get a toy ?
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy ?
Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown,
Would with the sceptre straight be stricken down ?

" If Collatinus dream of my intent
Will he not wake, and in a desperate rage
Post hither, this vile purpose to prevent ?
This siege that hath engirt his marriage,
This blur to youth, this sorrow to the sage,
This dying virtue, this surviving shame,
Whose crime will bear an ever-during blame ?

" O what excuse can my invention make,
When thou shalt charge me with so black a deed ?
Will not my tongue be mute, my frail joints shake ?
Mine eyes forego their light, my false heart bleed ?
The guilt being great the fear doth still exceed ;
And extreme fear can neither fight nor fly,
But, coward-like, with trembling terror die.

^a *Fancy's slave*—love's slave.

^b *Digression* is here used in the sense of *transgression*.

" Had Collatinus kill'd my son or sire,
 Or lain in ambush to betray my life,
 Or were he not my dear friend, this desire
 Might have excuse to work upon his wife ;
 As in revenge or quittal of such strife :
 But as he is my kinsman, my dear friend,
 The shame and fault finds no excuse nor end.

" Shameful it is ;—ay, if the fact be known :
 Hateful it is ;—there is no hate in loving :
 I 'll beg her love ;—but she is not her own ;
 The worst is but denial, and reproving :
 My will is strong, past reason's weak removing.
 Who fears a sentence or an old man's saw
 Shall by a painted cloth be kept in awe."

Thus, graceless, holds he disputation
 'Tween frozen conscience and hot-burning will,
 And with good thoughts makes dispensation,
 Urging the worsen sense for vantage still ;
 Which in a moment doth confound and kill
 All pure effects, and doth so far proceed,
 That what is vile shows like a virtuous deed.

Quoth he, " She took me kindly by the hand,
 And gaz'd for tidings in my eager eyes,
 Fearing some hard news from the warlike band
 Where her beloved Collatinus lies.
 O how her fear did make her colour rise !
 First red as roses that on lawn we lay,
 Then white as lawn, the roses took away.^a

" And how her hand, in my hand being lock'd,
 Forc'd it to tremble with her loyal fear ;
 Which struck her sad, and then it faster rock'd,

^a *Took away*—being taken away.

Until her husband's welfare she did bear;
 Whereat she smiled with so sweet a cheer,
 That had Narcissus seen her as she stood,
 Self-love had never drown'd him in the flood.

" Why hunt I then for colour or excuses?
 All orators are dumb when beauty pleadeth;
 Poor wretches have remorse in poor abuses;
 Love thrives not in the heart that shadows dreadeth:
 Affection is my captain, and he leadeth;
 And when his gaudy banner is display'd,
 The coward fights, and will not be dismay'd.

" Then, childish fear, avaunt! debating, die!
 Respect^a and reason wait on wrinkled age!
 My heart shall never countermand mine eye:
 Sad^b pause and deep regard besem the sage;
 My part is youth, and beats these from the stage:
 Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize;
 Then who fears sinking where such treasure lies?"

As corn o'ergrown by weeds, so heedful fear
 Is almost chok'd by unresisted lust.
 Away he steals with open listening ear,
 Full of foul hope, and full of fond mistrust;
 Both which, as servitors to the unjust,
 So cross him with their opposite persuasion,
 That now he vows a league, and now invasion.

Within his thought her heavenly image sits,
 And in the selfsame seat sits Collatine:
 That eye which looks on her confounds his wits;
 That eye which him beholds, as more divine,
 Unto a view so false will not incline;

^a *Respect*—prudence,—in the sense of the original Latin, looking again.

^b *Sad*—grave.

But with a pure appeal seeks to the heart,
Which once corrupted takes the worser part ;

And therein heartens up his servile powers,
Who, flatter'd by their leader's jocund show,
Stuff up his lust, as minutes fill up hours ;
And as their captain, so their pride doth grow,
Paying more slavish tribute than they owe.

By reprobate desire thus madly led,
The Roman lord marcheth to Lucrece' bed.

The locks between her chamber and his will,
Each one by him enforc'd, retires his ward ;
But as they open they all rate his ill,
Which drives the creeping thief to some regard ;
The threshold grates the door to have him heard ;
Night-wand'ring weasels shriek to see him there ;
They fright him, yet he still pursues his fear.

As each unwilling portal yields him way,
Through little vents and crannies of the place
The wind wars with his torch, to make him stay,
And blows the smoke of it into his face,
Extinguishing his conduct^a in this case ;
But his hot heart, which fond desire doth scorch
Puffs forth another wind that fires the torch ;

And being lighted, by the light he spies
Lucretia's glove, wherein her needle sticks ;
He takes it from the rushes where it lies,
And griping it, the needl^b his finger pricks :
As who should say, this glove to wanton tricks
Is not inur'd ; return again in haste ;
Thou seest our mistress' ornaments are chaste.

^a *Conduct*—conductor.

^b *Needl*—needle.

But all these poor forbiddings could not stay him ;
 He in the worst sense construes their denial :
 The doors, the wind, the glove that did delay him,
 He takes for accidental things of trial ;
 Or as those bars which stop the hourly dial,
 Who with a lingering stay his course doth let,^a
 Till every minute pays the hour his debt.

“ So, so,” quoth he, “ these lets attend the time,
 Like little frosts that sometime threat the spring,
 To add a more rejoicing to the prime,
 And give the sneaped^b birds more cause to sing.
 Pain pays the income of each precious thing ;
 Huge rocks, high winds, strong pirates, shelves and
 sands,
 The merchant fears, ere rich at home he lands.”

Now is he come unto the chamber door
 That shuts him from the heaven of his thought,
 Which with a yielding latch, and with no more,
 Hath barr'd him from the blessed thing he sought.
 So from himself impiety hath wrought,
 That for his prey to pray he doth begin,
 As if the heaven should countenance his sin.

But in the midst of his unfruitful prayer,
 Having solicited the eternal power,
 That his foul thoughts might compass his fair fair,
 And they would stand auspicious to the hour,
 Even there he starts :—quoth he, “ I must deflower ;
 The powers to whom I pray abhor this fact,
 How can they then assist me in the act ?

“ Then Love and Fortune be my gods, my guide !
 My will is back'd with resolution :
 Thoughts are but dreams till their effects be tried,

^a *Let*—obstruct.

^b *Sneaped*—checked.

The blackest sin is clear'd with absolution ;
 Against love's fire fear's frost hath dissolution.
 The eye of heaven is out, and misty night
 Covers the shame that follows sweet delight."

This said, his guilty hand pluck'd up the latch,
 And with his knee the door he opens wide :
 The dove sleeps fast that this night-owl will catch ;
 Thus treason works ere traitors be espied.
 Who sees the lurking serpent steps aside ;
 But she, sound sleeping, fearing no such thing,
 Lies at the mercy of his mortal sting.

Into the chamber wickedly he stalks,*
 And gazeth on her yet unstained bed.
 The curtains being close, about he walks,
 Rolling his greedy eyeballs in his head :
 By their high treason is his heart misled ;
 Which gives the watchword to his hand full soon,
 To draw the cloud that hides the silver moon.

Look, as the fair and fiery-pointed sun,
 Rushing from forth a cloud, bereaves our sight ;
 Even so, the curtain drawn, his eyes begun
 To wink, being blinded with a greater light :
 Whether it is that she reflects so bright,
 That dazzleth them, or else some shame supposed ;
 But blind they are, and keep themselves enclosed.

O, had they in that darksome prison died,
 Then had they seen the period of their ill !
 Then Collatine again by Lucrece' side
 In his clear bed might have reposed still :
 But they must ope, this blessed league to kill ;

* *Stalks.* To stalk literally means, to go warily or softly. It is the Anglo-Saxon *stælcian*—*pedetentim ire*. The fowler who creeps upon the birds *stalks*, and his *stalking* horse, derives its name from the character of the fowler's movement.

And holy-thoughted Lucrece to their sight
Must sell her joy, her life, her world's delight.

Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under,
Cozening the pillow of a lawful kiss ;
Who therefore angry, seems to part in sunder,
Swelling on either side to want his bliss ;
Between whose hills her head entombed is :
Where, like a virtuous monument, she lies,
To be admir'd of lewd unhallow'd eyes.

Without the bed her other fair hand was,
On the green coverlet ; whose perfect white
Show'd like an April daisy on the grass,
With pearly sweat, resembling dew of night.
Her eyes, like marigolds, had sheath'd their light,
And canopied in darkness sweetly lay,
Till they might open to adorn the day.

Her hair, like golden threads, play'd with her breath ;
O modest wantons ! wanton modesty !
Showing life's triumph in the map of death,
And death's dim look in life's mortality :
Each in her sleep themselves so beautify,
As if between them twain there were no strife,
But that life liv'd in death, and death in life.

Her breasts, like ivory globes circled with blue,
A pair of maiden worlds unconquered,
Save of their lord no bearing yoke they knew,
And him by oath they truly honoured.
These worlds in Tarquin new ambition bred :
Who, like a foul usurper, went about
From this fair throne to heave the owner out.

What could he see but mightily he noted ?
What did he note but strongly he desir'd ?
What he beheld on that he firmly doted,

And in his will his wilful eye he tir'd.*
 With more than admiration he admir'd
 Her azure veins, her alabaster skin,
 Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin.

As the grim lion fawneth o'er his prey,
 Sharp hunger by the conquest satisfied,
 So o'er this sleeping soul doth Tarquin stay,
 His rage of lust by gazing qualified ;
 Slack'd, not suppress'd ; for standing by her side,
 His eye, which late this mutiny restrains,
 Unto a greater uproar tempts his veins :

And they, like straggling slaves for pillage fighting,
 Obdurate vassals, fell exploits effecting,
 In bloody death and ravishment delighting,
 Nor children's tears, nor mothers' groans respecting,
 Swell in their pride, the onset still expecting :
 Anon his beating heart, alarum striking,
 Gives the hot charge, and bids them do their liking.

His drumming heart cheers up his burning eye,
 His eye commends the leading to his hand ;
 His hand, as proud of such a dignity,
 Smoking with pride, march'd on to make his stand
 On her bare breast, the heart of all her land ;
 Whose ranks of blue veins, as his hand did scale,
 Left their round turrets destitute and pale.

They, mustering to the quiet cabinet
 Where their dear governess and lady lies,
 Do tell her she is dreadfully beset,
 And fright her with confusion of their cries :
 She, much amaz'd, breaks ope her lock'd-up eyes,
 Who, peeping forth this tumult to behold,
 Are by his flaming torch dimin'd and controll'd.

* *Tir'd*—satiated, glutted—as a falcon *tires* on his prey.

Imagine her as one in dead of night
 From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking,
 That thinks she hath beheld some ghastly sprite,
 Whose grim aspect sets every joint a shaking ;
 What terror 't is ! but she, in worser taking.
 From sleep disturbed, heedfully doth view
 The sight which makes supposed terror true.

Wrapp'd and confounded in a thousand fears,
 Like to a new-kill'd bird she trembling lies ;
 She dares not look ; yet, winking, there appears
 Quick-shifting antics, ugly in her eyes :
 Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries :
 Who, angry that the eyes fly from their lights,
 In darkness daunts them with more dreadful sights.

His hand, that yet remains upon her breast,
 (Rude ram, to batter such an ivory wall !)
 May feel her heart, poor citizen, distress'd,
 Wounding itself to death, rise up and fall,
 Beating her bulk,* that his hand shakes withal.
 This moves in him more rage, and lesser pity,
 To make the breach, and enter this sweet city.

First, like a trumpet, doth his tongue begin
 To sound a parley to his heartless foe,
 Who o'er the white sheet peers her whiter chin,
 The reason of this rash alarm to know,
 Which he by dumb demeanour seeks to show ;
 But she with vehement prayers urgeth still
 Under what colour he commits this ill.

Thus he replies : " The colour in thy face
 (That even for anger makes the lily pale,
 And the red rose blush at her own disgrace)

* *Bulk*—the body, the whole mass.

Shall plead for me, and tell my loving tale :
 Under that colour am I come to scale
 Thy never-conquer'd fort ; the fault is thine,
 For those thine eyes betray thee unto mine.

" Thus I forestall thee, if thou mean to chide :
 Thy beauty hath ensnar'd thee to this night,
 Where thou with patience must my will abide,
 My will that marks thee for my earth's delight,
 Which I to conquer sought with all my might ;
 But as reproof and reason beat it dead,
 By thy bright beauty was it newly bred.

" I see what crosses my attempt will bring ;
 I know what thorns the growing rose defends ;
 I think the honey guarded with a sting :
 All this, beforehand, counsel comprehends :
 But will is deaf, and hears no heedful friends ;
 Only he hath an eye to gaze on beauty,
 And dotes on what he looks, 'gainst law or duty.

" I have debated, even in my soul,
 What wrong, what shame, what sorrow I shall breed ;
 But nothing can Affection's course control,
 Or stop the headlong fury of his speed.
 I know repentant tears ensue the deed,
 Reproach, disdain, and deadly enmity ;
 Yet strive I to embrace mine infamy."

This said, he shakes aloft his Roman blade,
 Which, like a falcon towering in the skies,
 Coucheth^a the fowl below with his wing's shade,
 Whose crooked beak threatens if he mount he dies :
 So under his insulting falchion lies
 Harmless Lucretia, marking what he tells
 With trembling fear, as fowl hear falcon's bells.

^a *Coucheth*—causes to couch.

"Lucrece," quoth he, "this night I must enjoy thee:
 If thou deny, then force must work my way,
 For in thy bed I purpose to destroy thee;
 That done, some worthless slave of thine I'll slay,
 To kill thine honour with thy life's decay;
 And in thy dead arms do I mean to place him,
 Swearing I slew him, seeing thee embrace him.

"So thy surviving husband shall remain
 The scornful mark of every open eye;
 Thy kinsmen hang their heads at this disdain,
 Thy issue blurr'd with nameless bastardy:
 And thou, the author of their obloquy,
 Shalt have thy trespass cited up in rhymes,
 And sung by children in succeeding times.

"But if thou yield I rest thy secret friend:
 The fault unknown is as a thought unacted;
 A little harm, done to a great good end,
 For lawful policy remains enacted.
 The poisonous simple sometimes is compacted
 In a pure compound; being so applied
 His venom in effect is purified.

"Then for thy husband and thy children's sake,
 Tender^a my suit: bequeath not to their lot
 The shame that from them no device can take,
 The blemish that will never be forgot;
 Worse than a slavish wipe, or birth-hour's blot:^b
 For marks descried in men's nativity
 Are nature's faults, not their own infamy."

Here with a cockatrice' dead-killing eye
 He rouseth up himself, and makes a pause;
 While she, the picture of pure piety,

^a *Tender*—heed, regard.

^b *Birth-hour's blot*—corporal blemish.

Like a white hind under the grype's^a sharp claws,
 Pleads in a wilderness, where are no laws,
 To the rough beast that knows no gentle right,
 Nor aught obeys but his foul appetite :

But when a black-fac'd cloud the world doth threat,
 In his dim mist the aspiring mountains hiding,
 From earth's dark womb some gentle gust doth get,
 Which blows these pitchy vapours from their bidding,
 Hindering their present fall by this dividing ;
 So his unhallow'd haste her words delays,
 And moody Pluto winks while Orpheus plays.

Yet, foul night-waking cat, he doth but dally,
 While in his holdfast foot the weak mouse panteth ;
 Her sad behaviour feeds his vulture folly,
 A swallowing gulf that even in plenty wanteth :
 His ear her prayers admits, but his heart granteth
 No penetrable entrance to her plaining :
 Tears harden lust, though marble wear with raining.

Her pity-pleading eyes are sadly fix'd
 In the remorseless wrinkles of his face ;
 Her modest eloquence with sighs is mix'd,
 Which to her oratory adds more grace.
 She puts the period often from his place,
 And 'midst the sentence so her accent breaks,
 That twice she doth begin ere once she speaks.

She conjures him by high almighty Jove,
 By knighthood, gentry, and sweet friendship's oath,
 By her untimely tears, her husband's love,
 By holy human law, and common troth,
 By heaven and earth, and all the power of both,

^a Steevens says the *grype* is properly the griffin. But in the passage before us, as in the early English writers, the word is applied to birds of prey,—the eagle especially.

That to his borrow'd bed he make retire,
And stoop to honour, not to foul desire.

Quoth she, "Reward not hospitality
With such black payment as thou hast pretended ;
Mud not the fountain that gave drink to thee ;
Mar not the thing that cannot be amended ;
End thy ill aim, before thy shoot be ended :
He is no woodman that doth bend his bow
To strike a poor unseasonable doe.

" My husband is thy friend, for his sake spare me ;
Thyself art mighty, for thine own sake leave me ;
Myself a weakling, do not then ensnare me ;
Thou look'st not like deceit ; do not deceive me :
My sighs, like whirlwinds, labour hence to leave
thee.

If ever man were mov'd with woman's moans,
Be moved with my tears, my sighs, my groans :

" All which together, like a troubled ocean,
Beat at thy rocky and wreck-threatening heart ;
To soften it with their continual motion ;
For stones dissolv'd to water do convert.
O, if no harder than a stone thou art,
Melt at my tears, and be compassionate !
Soft pity enters at an iron gate.

" In Tarquin's likeness I did entertain thee ;
Hast thou put on his shape to do him shame ?
To all the host of heaven I complain me,
Thou wrong'st his honour, wound'st his princely name.
Thou art not what thou seem'st ; and if the same
Thou seem'st not what thou art, a god, a king ;
For kings like gods should govern everything.

Pretended—proposed.

" How will thy shame be seeded in thine age,
When thus thy vices bud before thy spring !
If in thy hope thou dar'st do such outrage,
What dar'st thou not when once thou art a king !
O be remember'd, no outrageous thing
From vassal actors can be wip'd away ;
Then kings' misdeeds cannot be hid in clay.

" This deed will make thee only lov'd for fear,
But happy monarchs still are fear'd for love :
With foul offenders thou perforce must bear,
When they in thee the like offences prove :
If but for fear of this thy will remove ;
For princes are the glass, the school, the book,
Where subjects' eyes do learn, do read, do look.

" And wilt thou be the school where Lust shall learn ?
Must he in thee read lectures of such shame ?
Wilt thou be glass, wherein it shall discern
Authority for sin, warrant for blame,
To privilege dishonour in thy name ?
Thou back'st reproach against long-lived laud,
And mak'st fair reputation but a bawd.

" Hast thou command ? by him that gave it thee,
From a pure heart command thy rebel will :
Draw not thy sword to guard iniquity,
For it was lent thee all that brood to kill.
Thy princely office how canst thou fulfil,
When, pattern'd by thy fault, foul Sin may say,
He learn'd to sin, and thou didst teach the way ?

" Think but how vile a spectacle it were
To view thy present trespass in another.
Men's faults do seldom to themselves appear ;
Their own transgressions partially they smother :
This guilt would seem death-worthy in thy brother.

O how are they wrapp'd in with infamies,
'That from their own misdeeds askaunce their eyes!

"To thee, to thee, my heav'd-up hands appeal,
Not to seducing lust, thy rash relier;
I sue for exil'd majesty's repeal;^a
Let him return, and flattering thoughts retire:
His true respect will 'prison false desire,
And wipe the dim mist from thy doting cync,
'That thou shalt see thy state, and pity mine."

"Have done," quoth he; "my uncontrolled tide
Turns not, but swells the higher by this let.
Small lights are soon blown out, huge fires abide,
And with the wind in greater fury fret:
The petty streams that pay a daily debt
To their salt sovereign, with their fresh falls' haste,
Add to his flow, but alter not his taste."

"Thou art," quoth she, "a sea, a sovereign king;
And lo, there falls into thy boundless flood
Black lust, dishonour, shame, misgoverning,
Who seek to stain the ocean of thy blood.
If all these petty ills shall change thy good,
Thy sea within a puddle's womb is hers'd,
And not the puddle in thy sea dispers'd."

"So shall these slaves be king, and thou their slave;
Thou nobly base, they basely dignified;
Thou their fair life, and they thy fouler grave;
Thou loathed in their shame, they in thy pride:
The lesser thing should not the greater hide;
The cedar stoops not to the base shrub's foot,
But low shrubs wither at the cedar's root."

Repeal--recall; from the French *rappeler*.

"So let thy thoughts, low vassals to thy state"—
"No more," quoth he, "by heaven, I will not hear thee :
Yield to my love ; if not, enforced hate,
Instead of love's coy touch, shall rudely tear thee ;
That done, despitefully I mean to bear thee
Unto the base bed of some rascal groom,
To be thy partner in this shameful doom."

This said, he sets his foot upon the light,
For light and lust are deadly enemies :
Shame folded up in blind concealing night,
When most unseen, then most doth tyrannize.
The wolf hath seiz'd his prey, the poor lamb cries
Till with her own white fleece her voice controll'd
Entombs her outcry in her lips' sweet fold :

For with the nightly linen that she wears
He pens her piteous clamours in her head ;
Cooling his hot face in the chastest tears
That ever modest eyes with sorrow shed.
O, that prone^a lust should stain so pure a bed !
The spots whereof could weeping purify,
Her tears should drop on them perpetually.

But she hath lost a dearer thing than life,
And he hath won what he would lose again.
This forced league doth force a further strife,
This momentary joy breeds months of pain,
This hot desire converts to cold disdain :
Pure Chastity is rifled of her store,
And Lust, the thief, far poorer than before.

Look, as the full-fed hound or gorged hawk,
Unapt for tender smell or speedy flight,
Make slow pursuit, or altogether balk

^a *Prone*—having inclination or propensity, and so self-willed, headstrong.

The prey wherein by nature they delight ;
 So surfeit-taking Tarquin fares this night :
 His taste delicious, in digestion souring,
 Devours his will that liv'd by foul devouring.

O deeper sin than bottomless conceit
 Can comprehend in still imagination !
 Drunken desire must vomit his receipt,
 Ere he can see his own abomination.
 While lust is in his pride no exclamation
 Can curb his heat, or rein his rash desire,
 Till, like a jade, self-will himself doth tire.

And then with lank and lean discolour'd cheek,
 With heavy eye, knit brow, and strengthless pace,
 Feeble desire, all recreant, poor, and meek,
 Like to a bankrupt beggar wails his case :
 The flesh being proud, desire doth fight with grace,
 For there it revels ; and when that decays,
 The guilty rebel for remission prays.

So fares it with this faultful lord of Rome,
 Who this accomplishment so hotly chas'd ;
 For now against himself he sounds this doom,
 That through the length of times he stands disgrac'd :

Besides, his soul's fair temple is defac'd ;
 To whose weak ruins muster troops of cares,
 To ask the spotted princess how she fares.

She says, her subjects with foul insurrection
 Have batter'd down her consecrated wall,
 And by their mortal fault brought in subjection
 Her immortality, and make her thrall
 To living death, and pain perpetual :
 Which in her prescience she controlled still,
 But her foresight could not forestall their will.

Even in this thought through the dark night he stealeth,
A captive victor that hath lost in gain ;
Bearing away the wound that nothing healeth,
The scar that will, despite of cure, remain,
Leaving his spoil perplex'd in greater pain.
She bears the load of lust he left behind,
And he the burthen of a guilty mind.

He like a thievish dog creeps sadly thence ;
She like a wearied lamb lies panting there ;
He scowls, and hates himself for his offence ;
She, desperate, with her nails her flesh doth tear ;
He faintly flies, sweating with guilty fear ;
She stays exclaiming on the direful night ;
He runs, and chides his vanish'd, loath'd delight.

He thence departs a heavy convertite ;
She there remains a hopeless castaway :
He in his speed looks for the morning light ;
She prays she never may behold the day ;
" For day," quoth she, " night's scapes doth open lay ;
And my true eyes have never practis'd how
To cloak offences with a cunning brow.

" They think not but that every eye can see
The same disgrace which they themselves behold ;
And therefore would they still in darkness be,
To have their unseen sin remain untold ;
For they their guilt with weeping will unfold,
And grave, like water, that doth eat in steel,
Upon my cheeks what helpless shame I feel."

Here she exclaims against repose and rest,
And bids her eyes hereafter still be blind.
She wakes her heart by beating on her breast,
And bids it leap from thence, where it may find
Some purer chest, to close so pure a mind.

Frantic with grief thus breathes she forth her spite
Against the unseen secrecy of night :

“ O comfort-killing night, image of hell !
Dim register and notary of shame !
Black stage for tragedies and murders fell !
Vast sin-concealing chaos ! nurse of blame !
Blind muffled bawd ! dark harbour for defame !
Grim cave of death, whispering conspirator,
With close-tongued treason and the ravisher !

“ O hateful, vaporous, and foggy night,
Since thou art guilty of my cureless crime,
Muster thy mists to meet the eastern light,
Make war against proportion'd course of time !
Or if thou wilt permit the sun to climb
His wonted height, yet ere he go to bed,
Knit poisonous clouds about his golden head.

“ With rotten damps ravish the morning air ;
Let their exhal'd unwholesome breaths make sick
The life of purity, the supreme fair,
Ere he arrive his weary noontide prick ;^a
And let thy misty vapours march so thick,
That in their smoky ranks his smother'd light
May set at noon, and make perpetual night.

“ Were Tarquin night, (as he is but night's child,)
The silver-shining queen he would distain ;
Her twinkling handmaids too, by him defil'd,
Through night's black bosom should not peep again
So should I have copartners in my pain :
And fellowship in woe doth woe assuage,
As palmers' chat makes short their pilgrimage.

^a *Noontide prick*—the point of noon.

"Where^a now I have no one to blush with me,
 To cross their arms, and hang their heads with mine,
 To mask their brows, and hide their infamy ;
 But I alone alone must sit and pine,
 Seasoning the earth with showers of silver brine,
 Mingling my talk with tears, my grief with groans,
 Poor wasting monuments of lasting moans.

"O night, thou furnace of foul-reeking smoke,
 Let not the jealous day behold that face
 Which underneath thy black all-hiding cloak
 Immodestly lies martyr'd with disgrace !
 Keep still possession of thy gloomy place,
 That all the faults which in thy reign are made
 May likewise be sepulchred^b in thy shade !

"Make me not object to the tell-tale day !
 The light will show, charáctér'd^c in my brow,
 The story of sweet chastity's decay,
 The impious breach of holy wedlock vow :
 Yea, the illiterate, that know not how
 To 'cipher what is writ in learned books,
 Will quote^d my loathsome trespass in my looks.

"The nurse, to still her child, will tell my story,
 And fright her crying babe with Tarquin's name ;
 The orator, to deck his oratory,
 Will couple my reproach to Tarquin's shame :
 Feast-finding minstrels, tuning my defame,

^a *Where*—whereas.

^b *Sepulchred*. Milton uses the word with the same accent, in his lines on Shakspeare :—

"And so sepulchred in such pomp does lie,
 That kings for such a tomb would wish to die."

^c *Charáctér'd*. Here again is an accentuation different from the present, but which is common to all Shakspeare's contemporaries.

^d *Quote*—observe.

Will tie the hearers to attend each line,
How Tarquin wronged me, I Collatine.

"Let my good name, that senseless reputation,
For Collatine's dear love be kept unspotted :
If that be made a theme for disputation,
The branches of another root are rotted,
And undeserv'd reproach to him allotted,
That is as clear from this attaind of mine,
As I, ere this, was pure to Collatine.

"O unseen shame ! invisible disgrace !
O unfelt sore ! crest-wounding, private scar !
Reproach is stamp'd in Collatinus' face,
And Tarquin's eye may read the mot^a afar,
How he in peace is wounded, not in war.
Alas, how many bear such shameful blows,
Which not themselves but he that gives them knows !

"If, Collatine, thine honour lay in me,
From me by strong assault it is bereft.
My honey lost, and I, a drone-like bee,
Have no perfection of my summer left,
But robb'd and ransack'd by injurious theft :
In thy weak hive a wandering wasp hath crept,
And suck'd the honey which thy chaste bee kept.

"Yet am I guilty of thy honour's wrack,—
Yet for thy honour did I entertain him ;
Coming from thee, I could not put him back,
For it had been dishonour to disdain him :
Besides of weariness he did complain him,
And talk'd of virtue ;—O, unlook'd for evil,
When virtue is profan'd in such a devil !

^a *Mot*—motto.

"Why should the worm intrude the maiden bud ?
 Or hateful cuckoos hatch in sparrows' nests ?
 Or toads infect fair founts with venom mud ?
 Or tyrant folly lurk in gentle breasts ?^a
 Or kings be breakers of their own behests ?
 But no perfection is so absolute,
 That some impurity doth not pollute.

"The aged man that coffers up his gold
 Is plagued with cramps, and gout, and painful fits,
 And scarce hath eyes his treasure to behold,
 But like still-pining Tantalus he sits,
 And useless barns the harvest of his wits ;
 Having no other pleasure of his gain
 But torment that it cannot cure his pain.

"So then he hath it, when he cannot use it,
 And leaves it to be master'd by his young,
 Who in their pride do presently abuse it :
 Their father was too weak, and they too strong,
 To hold their cursed-blessed fortune long.
 The sweets we wish for turn to loathed sour,
 Even in the moment that we call them ours.

"Unruly blasts wait on the tender spring ;
 Unwholesome weeds take root with precious flowers ;
 The adder hisses where the sweet birds sing :
 What virtue breeds iniquity devours :
 We have no good that we can say is ours.
 But ill-annexed Opportunity
 Or kills his life, or else his quality.

"O Opportunity ! thy guilt is great :
 'T is thou that execut'st the traitor's treason ;
 Thou sett'st the wolf where he the lamb may get ;

^a *Folly* is here used in the sense of wickedness ; and *gentle* in that of well-born.

Whoever plots the sin, thou point'st the season ;
 'T is thou that spurn'st at right, at law, at reason ;
 And in thy shady cell, where none may spy him,
 Sits Sin, to seize the souls that wander by him.

" Thou mak'st the vestal violate her oath ;
 Thou blow'st the fire when temperance is thaw'd ;
 Thou smother'st honesty, thou murder'st troth ;
 Thou foul abetter ! thou notorious bawd ;
 Thou plantest scandal, and displacest laud :
 Thou ravisher, thou traitor, thou false thief,
 Thy honey turns to gall, thy joy to grief !

" Thy secret pleasure turns to open shame,
 Thy private feasting to a public fast ;
 Thy smoothing ^a titles to a ragged ^b name ;
 Thy sugar'd tongue to bitter wormwood taste :
 Thy violent vanities can never last.

How comes it then, vile Opportunity,
 Being so bad, such numbers seek for thee ?

" When wilt thou be the humble suppliant's friend,
 And bring him where his suit may be obtain'd ?
 When wilt thou sort ^c an hour great strifes to end ?
 Or free that soul which wretchedness hath chain'd ?
 Give physic to the sick, ease to the pain'd ?
 The poor, lame, blind, halt, creep, cry out for thee ;
 But they ne'er meet with Opportunity.

" The patient dies while the physician sleeps ;
 The orphan pines while the oppressor feeds,
 Justice is feasting while the widow weeps ;
 Advice is sporting while infection breeds ; ^d
 Thou grant'st no time for charitable deeds :

^a *Smoothing*—flattering.

^b *Ragged* is here used in the sense of contemptible.

^c *Sort*—assign, appropriate.

^d *Advice* is here used in the sense of government, municipal

Wrath, envy, treason, rape, and murder's rages,
Thy heinous hours wait on them as their pages.

"When truth and virtue have to do with thee
A thousand crosses keep them from thy aid;
They buy thy help: but Sin ne'er gives a fee,
He gratis comes; and thou art well appay'd^a
As well to hear as grant what he hath said.

My Collatine would else have come to me
When Tarquin did, but he was stay'd by thee.

"Guilty thou art of murder and of theft;
Guilty of perjury and subornation;
Guilty of treason, forgery, and shift;
Guilty of incest, that abomination:
An accessory by thine inclination

To all sins past, and all that are to come,
From the creation to the general doom.

"Mis-shapen Time, copesmate of ugly night,
Swift subtle post, carrier of grisly care,
Eater of youth, false slave to false delight,
Base watch of woes, sin's pack-horse, virtue's snare;
Thou nursest all, and murderest all that are.

O hear me then, injurious, shifting Time!
Be guilty of my death, since of my crime.

"Why hath thy servant, Opportunity,
Betray'd the hours thou gav'st me to repose?
Cancell'd my fortunes, and enchained me
To endless date of never-ending woes?
Time's office is to fine^b the hate of foes;

or civil; and the line too correctly describes the carelessness of those in high places, who abated not their feasting and their revelry while pestilence was doing its terrible work around them.

^a *Appay'd*—satisfied, pleased.

^b *To fine*—to bring to an end.

To eat up errors by opinion bred,
Not spend the dowry of a lawful bed.

" Time's glory is to calm contending kings,
To unmask falsehood, and bring truth to light,
To stamp the seal of time in aged things,
To wake the morn, and sentinel the night,
To wrong the wronger till he render right;
To ruinate proud buildings with thy hours,
And smear with dust their glittering golden towers :

" To fill with worm-holes stately monuments,
To feed oblivion with decay of things,
To blot old books, and alter their contents,
To pluck the quills from ancient ravens' wings,
To dry the old oak's sap, and cherish springs ; *
To spoil antiquities of hammer'd steel,
And turn the giddy round of Fortune's wheel ;

" To show the beldame daughters of her daughter,
To make the child a man, the man a child,
To slay the tiger that doth live by slaughter,
To tame the unicorn and lion wild,
To mock the subtle, in themselves beguil'd ;
To cheer the ploughman with increaseful crops.
And waste huge stones with little water-drops.

" Why work'st thou mischief in thy pilgrimage,
Unless thou couldst return to make amends ?
One poor retiring ^b minute in an age
Would purchase thee a thousand thousand friends,
Lending him wit that to bad debtors lends :
O, this dread night, wouldst thou one hour come back,
I could prevent this storm, and shun thy wrack !

* Springs—shoots—saplings.

^b Retiring is here used in the sense of coming back again.

"Thou ceaseless lackey to eternity,
With some mischance cross Tarquin in his flight :
Devise extremes beyond extremity,
To make him curse this cursed crimeful night :
Let ghastly shadows his lewd eyes affright ;
And the dire thought of his committed evil
Shape every bush a hideous shapeless devil.

"Disturb his hours of rest with restless trances,
Afflict him in his bed with bedrid groans ;
Let there bechance him pitiful mischances,
To make him moan, but pity not his moans :
Stone him with harden'd hearts, harder than stones ;
And let mild women to him lose their mildness,
Wilder to him than tigers in their wildness.

"Let him have time to tear his curled hair,
Let him have time against himself to rave,
Let him have time of Time's help to despair,
Let him have time to live a loathed slave,
Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave ;
And time to see one that by alms doth live
Disdain to him disdained scraps to give.

"Let him have time to see his friends his foes,
And merry fools to mock at him resort ;
Let him have time to mark how slow time goes
In time of sorrow, and how swift and short
His time of folly and his time of sport :
And ever let his unrecalling^a crime
Have time to wail the abusing of his time.

"O Time, thou tutor both to good and bad,
Teach me to curse him that thou taught'st this ill !
At his own shadow let the thief run mad !

^a *Unrecalling*—not to be recalled.

Himself himself seek every hour to kill !
 Such wretched hands such wretched blood should
 spill :

For who so base would such an office have
 As slanderous death's-man to so base a slave ?

" The baser is he, coming from a king,
 To shame his hope with deeds degenerate.
 The mightier man, the mightier is the thing
 That makes him honour'd, or begets him hate ;
 For greatest scandal waits on greatest state.
 The moon being clouded presently is miss'd,
 But little stars may hide them when they list.

" The crow may bathe his coal-black wings in mire,
 And unperceiv'd fly with the filth away ;
 But if the like the snow-white swan desire,
 The stain upon his silver down will stay.
 Poor grooms are sightless night, kings glorious day.
 Gnats are unnoted wheresoe'er they fly,
 But eagles gaz'd upon with every eye.

" Out, idle words, servants to shallow fools !
 Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators !
 Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools,
 Debate where leisure serves with dull debaters ;
 To trembling clients be you mediators :
 For me, I force* not argument a straw,
 Since that my case is past the help of law.

" In vain I rail at Opportunity,
 At time, at Tarquin, and uncheerful night ;
 In vain I cavil with my infamy,
 In vain I spurn at my confirm'd despite :
 This helpless smoke of words doth me no right.

* *Force* is here used in the sense of value or regard.

The remedy indeed to do me good,
Is to let forth my foul, defiled blood.

"Poor hand, why quiver'st thou at this decree?
Honour thyself to rid me of this shame;
For if I die my honour lives in thee,
But if I live thou liv'st in my defame:
Since thou couldst not defend thy loyal dame,
And wast afraid to scratch her wicked foe,
Kill both thyself and her for yielding so."

This said, from her betumbled couch she starteth,
To find some desperate instrument of death:
But this no-slaughter-house no tool imparteth,
To make more vent for passage of her breath.
Which thronging through her lips so vanisheth
As smoke from *Ætna*, that in air consumes,
Or that which from discharged cannon fumes.

"In vain," quoth she, "I live and seek in vain
Some happy mean to end a hapless life.
I fear'd by Tarquin's falchion to be slain,
Yet for the selfsame purpose seek a knife:
But when I fear'd I was a loyal wife;
So am I now:—O no, that cannot be;
Of that true type hath Tarquin rifled me.

"O! that is gone for which I sought to live,
And therefore now I need not fear to die.
To clear this spot by death, at least I give
A badge of fame to slander's livery;^a
A dying life to living infamy;
Poor helpless help, the treasure stolen away,
To burn the guiltless casket where it lay!

^a An allusion to the badges which servants or retainers of families of rank wore on their liveries.

"Well, well, dear Collatine, thou shalt not know
 The stained taste of violated troth;
 I will not wrong thy true affection so
 To flatter thee with an infringed oath;
 This bastard graff shall never come to growtn:
 He shall not boast who did thy stock pollute
 That thou art doting father of his fruit.

"Nor shall he smile at thee in secret thought,
 Nor laugh with his companions at thy state;
 But thou shalt know thy interest was not bought
 Basely with gold, but stolen from forth thy gate.
 For me, I am the mistress of my fate,
 And with my trespass never will dispense,
 Till life to death acquit my forc'd offence.

"I will not poison thee with my attaint,
 Nor fold my fault in cleanly-coin'd excuses;
 My sable ground of sin I will not paint,
 To hide the truth of this false night's abuses:
 My tongue shall utter all: mine eyes like sluices,
 As from a mountain-spring that feeds a dale,
 Shall gush pure streams to purge my impure tale."

By this, lamenting Philomel had ended
 The well-tun'd warble of her nightly sorrow,
 And solemn night with slow-sad gait descended
 To ugly hell; when lo, the blushing morrow
 Lends light to all fair eyes that light will borrow;
 But cloudy Lucrece shames herself to see,
 And therefore still in night would cloister'd be.

Revealing day through every cranny spies,
 And seems to point her out where she sits weeping;
 To whom she sobbing speaks: "O eye of eyes,
 Why priest thou through my window? leave thy peeping;
 Mock with thy tickling beams eyes that are sleeping:

Brand not my forehead with thy piercing light,
For day hath nought to do what 's done by night."

Thus cavils she with everything she sees :
True grief is fond ^a and testy as a child,
Who wayward once, his mood with nought agrees.
Old woes, not infant sorrows, bear them mild ;
Continuance tames the one ; the other wild,
Like an unpractis'd swimmer plunging still
With too much labour drowns for want of skill.

So she, deep-drenched in a sea of care,
Holds disputation with each thing she views,
And to herself all sorrow doth compare ;
No object but her passion's strength renews ;
And as one shifts, another straight ensues :
Sometime her grief is dumb, and hath no words ;
Sometime 't is mad, and too much talk affords.

The little birds that tune their morning's joy
Make her moans mad with their sweet melody.
For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy ;
Sad souls are slain in merry company ;
Grief best is pleas'd with grief's society :
True sorrow then is feelingly suffic'd
When with like semblance it is sympathis'd.

'T is double death to drown in ken of shore ;
He ten times pines that pines beholding food ;
To see the salve doth make the wound ache more ;
Great grief grieves most at that would do it good ;
Deep woes roll forward like a gentle flood,
Who, being stopp'd, the bounding banks o'erflows :
Grief dallied with nor law nor limit knows.

^a *Fond*—foolish.

" You mocking birds," quoth she, " your tunes en-
tomb

Within your hollow-swelling feather'd breasts,

And in my hearing be you mute and dumb!

(My restless discord loves no stops nor rests;

A woeful hostess brooks not merry guests:)

Relish your nimble notes to pleasing ears;

Distress likes dumps * when time is kept with tears.

" Come, Philomel, that sing'st of ravishment,

Make thy sad grove in my dishevell'd hair.

As the dank earth weeps at thy languishment,

So I at each sad strain will strain a tear,

And with deep groans the diapason bear:

For burthen-wise I 'll hum on Tarquin still,

While thou on Tereus descant'st better skill.^b

" And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part,

To keep thy sharp woes waking, wretched I,

To imitate thee well, against my heart

Will fix a sharp knife, to affright mine eye;

Who, if it wink, shall thereon fall and die.

These means, as frets upon an instrument,

Shall tune our heartstrings to true languishment.

" And for, poor bird, thou sing'st not in the day,

As shaming any eye should thee behold,

Some dark deep desert, seated from the way,

That knows nor parching heat nor freezing cold,

We will find out; and there we will unfold

To creatures stern sad tunes, to change their kinds:

Since men prove beasts let beasts bear gentle
minds."

Dumps—melancholy airs.

Better skill. We must probably here understand *with better skill*.

As the poor frightened deer, that stands at gaze,
Wildly determining which way to fly,
Or one encompass'd with a winding maze,
That cannot tread the way out readily ;
So with herself is she in mutiny,
To live or die which of the twain were better,
When life is sham'd, and Death reproach's debtor.

" To kill myself," quoth she, " alack ! what were it,
But with my body my poor soul's pollution ?
They that lose half with greater patience bear it
Than they whose whole is swallow'd in confusion.
That mother tries a merciless conclusion
Who, having two sweet babes, when death takes one,
Will slay the other, and be nurse to none.

" My body or my soul, which was the dearer ?
When the one pure, the other made divine.
Whose love of either to myself was nearer ?
When both were kept for heaven and Collatine.
Ah me ! the bark peel'd from the lofty pine,
His leaves will wither, and his sap decay ;
So must my soul, her bark being peel'd away.

" Her house is sack'd, her quiet interrupted,
Her mansion batter'd by the enemy ;
Her sacred temple spotted, spoil'd, corrupted,
Grossly engirt with daring infamy :
Then let it not be call'd impiety
If in this blemish'd fort I make some hole
Through which I may convey this troubled soul.

" Yet die I will not till my Collatine
Have heard the cause of my untimely death ;
That he may vow, in that sad hour of mine,
Revenge on him that made me stop my breath.
My stained blood to Tarquin I 'll bequeath,

Which by him tainted shall for him be spent,
And as his due writ in my testament.

" My honour I 'll bequeath unto the knife
That wounds my body so dishonoured.
'T is honour to deprive dishonour'd life ;
The one will live, the other being dead :
So of shame's ashes shall my fame be bred ;
For in my death I murder shameful scorn :
My shame so dead, mine honour is new-born.

" Dear lord of that dear jewel I have lost,
What legacy shall I bequeath to thee ?
My resolution, Love, shall be thy boast,
By whose example thou reveng'd mayst be.
How Tarquin must be used, read it in me :
Myself, thy friend, will kill myself, thy foe,
And, for my sake, serve thou false Tarquin so.

" This brief abridgment of my will I make :
My soul and body to the skies and ground ;
My resolution, husband, do thou take ;
Mine honour be the knife's that makes my wound ;
My shame be his that did my fame confound ;
And all my fame that lives disbursed be
To those that live, and think no shame of me.

" Thou, Collatine, shalt oversee this will ; *
How was I overseen that thou shalt see it !
My blood shall wash the slander of mine ill ;
My life's foul deed my life's fair end shall free it.
Faint not faint heart, but stoutly say, ' so be it.'
Yield to my hand ; my hand shall conquer thee ;
Thou dead, both die, and both shall victors be."

* The executor of a will was sometimes called the overseer, but our ancestors often appointed overseers as well as executors.

This plot of death when sadly she had laid,
 And wip'd the brinish pearl from her bright eyes,
 With untun'd tongue she hoarsely call'd her maid,
 Whose swift obedience to her mistress hies ;
 For fleet-wing'd duty with thought's feathers flies.

Poor Lucrece' cheeks unto her maid seem so
 As winter meads when sun doth melt their snow.

Her mistress she doth give demure good-morrow,
 With soft-slow tongue, true mark of modesty,
 And sorts a sad look to her lady's sorrow,
 (For why ? her face wore sorrow's livery,)
 But durst not ask of her audaciously
 Why her two suns were cloud-eclipsed so,
 Nor why her fair cheeks over-wash'd with woe.

But as the earth doth weep, the sun being set,
 Each flower moisten'd like a melting eye ;
 Even so the maid with swelling drops 'gan wet
 Her circled eyne, enforc'd by sympathy
 Of those fair suns, set in her mistress' sky,
 Who in a salt-wav'd ocean quench their light,
 Which makes the maid weep like the dewy night.

A pretty while these pretty creatures stand,
 Like ivory conduits coral cisterns filling :
 One justly weeps ; the other takes in hand
 No cause, but company, of her drops spilling :
 Their gentle sex to weep are often willing ;
 Grieving themselves to guess at others' smarts,
 And then they drown their eyes, or break their hearts.

For men have marble, women waxen minds,
 And therefore are they form'd as marble will ;^a
 The weak oppress'd, the impression of strange kinds

^a *Marble* here stands for men, whose minds have just been compared to marble.

Is form'd in them by force, by fraud, or skill :
 Then call them not the authors of their ill,
 No more than wax shall be accounted evil,
 Wherein is stamp'd the semblance of a devil.

Their smoothness, like a goodly champaign plain,
 Lays open all the little worms that creep ;
 In men, as in a rough-grown grove, remain
 Cave-keeping evils that obscurely sleep :
 Through crystal walls each little mote will peep :
 Though men can cover crimes with bold stern looks,
 Poor women's faces are their own faults' books.

No man inveigh against the wither'd flower,
 But chide rough winter that the flower hath kill'd !
 Not that devour'd, but that which doth devour
 Is worthy blame. O, let it not be hild ^a
 Poor women's faults that they are so fulfill'd ^b
 With men's abuses ! those proud lords, to blame,
 Make weak-made women tenants to their shame.

The precedent whereof in Lucrece view,
 Assail'd by night with circumstances strong
 Of present death, and shame that might ensue
 By that her death, to do her husband wrong :
 Such danger to resistance did belong,
 That dying fear through all her body spread ;
 And who cannot abuse a body dead ?

By this, mild patience bid fair Lucrece speak
 To the poor counterfeit ^c of her complaining :
 " My girl," quoth she, " on what occasion break
 Those tears from thee, that down thy cheeks are raining ?
 If thou dost weep for grief of my sustaining,

^a *Hild*—held. Such a change for the sake of rhyme is frequent in Spenser.

^b *Fulfill'd*—completely filled.

^c *Counterfeit*—a likeness or copy

Know, gentle wench, it small avails my mood :
If tears could help mine own would do me good.

" But tell me, girl, when went "—(and there she stay'd
Till after a deep groan) " Tarquin from hence ?"

" Madam, ere I was up," replied the maid,

" The more to blame my sluggard negligence :

Yet with the fault I thus far can dispense ;

Myself was stirring ere the break of day,

And, ere I rose, was Tarquin gone away.

" But, lady, if your maid may be so bold,
She would request to know your heaviness."

" O peace!" quoth Lucrece ; " if it should be told,

The repetition cannot make it less ;

For more it is than I can well express :

And that deep torture may be call'd a hell,

When more is felt than one hath power to tell.

" Go, get me hither paper, ink, and pen—

Yet save that labour, for I have them here.

What should I say ?—One of my husband's men

Bid thou be ready, by and by, to bear

A letter to my lord, my love, my dear ;

Bid him with speed prepare to carry it :

The cause craves haste, and it will soon be writ."

Her maid is gone, and she prepares to write,

First hovering o'er the paper with her quill :

Conceit and grief an eager combat fight ;

What wit sets down is blotted straight with will ;

This is too curious-good, this blunt and ill :

Much like a press of people at a door,

Throng her inventions, which shall be before.

At last she thus begins :—" 'Thou worthy lord

Of that unworthy wife that greeteth thee,

Health to thy person ! next vouchsafe to afford

(If ever, love, thy Lucrece thou wilt see)
 Some present speed to come and visit me :
 So I commend me from our house in grief ;
 My woes are tedious, though my words are brief."

Here folds she up the tenor of her woe,
 Her certain sorrow writ uncertainly.
 By this short schedule Collatine may know
 Her grief, but not her grief's true quality ;
 She dares not thereof make discovery,
 Lest he should hold it her own gross abuse,
 Ere she with blood had stain'd her stain'd excuse.

Besides, the life and feeling of her passion
 She hoards, to spend when he is by to hear her ;
 When sighs, and groans, and tears may grace the fashion
 Of her disgrace, the better so to clear her
 From that suspicion which the world might bear her.
 To shun this blot, she would not blot the letter
 With words, till action might become them better.

To see sad sights moves more than hear them told ;
 For then the eye interprets to the ear
 The heavy motion that it doth behold,*
 When every part a part of woe doth bear.
 'T is but a part of sorrow that we hear :
 Deep sounds make lesser noise than shallow fords,
 And sorrow ebbs, being blown with wind of words.

Her letter now is seal'd, and on it writ,
 " At Ardea to my lord with more than haste : "
 The post attends, and she delivers it,
 Charging the sour-fac'd groom to hie as fast
 As lagging fowls before the northern blast.
 Speed more than speed but dull and slow she deems ;
 Extremity still urgeth such extremes.

* *Motion*—dumb show.

The homely villein court'sies to her low ;
And blushing on her, with a steadfast eye
Receives the scroll, without or yea or no,
And forth with bashful innocence doth hie.
But they whose guilt within their bosoms lie
Imagine every eye beholds their blame ;
For Lucrece thought he blush'd to see her shame ;

When, silly groom ! God wot, it was defect
Of spirit, life, and bold audacity.
Such harmless creatures have a true respect
To talk in deeds, while others saucily
Promise more speed, but do it leisurely :
Even so, this pattern of the worn-out age
Pawn'd honest looks, but laid no words to gage.

His kindled duty kindled her mistrust,
That two red fires in both their faces blaz'd ;
She thought he blush'd, as knowing Tarquin's lust,
And, blushing with him, wistly on him gaz'd ;
Her earnest eye did make him more amaz'd :
The more she saw the blood his cheeks replenish,
The more she thought he spied in her some blemish.

But long she thinks till he return again,
And yet the duteous vassal scarce is gone.
The weary time she cannot entertain,
For now 't is stale to sigh, to weep, and groan :
So woe hath wearied woe, moan tired moan,
That she her complaints a little while doth stay,
Pausing for means to mourn some newer way.

At last she calls to mind where hangs a piece
Of skilful painting, made for Priam's Troy ;
Before the which is drawn* the power of Greece,

* *Drawn*—drawn out into the field.

For Helen's rape the city to destroy,
 Threat'ning cloud-kissing Ilion with annoy ;
 Which the conceited * painter drew so proud,
 As heaven (it seem'd) to kiss the turrets bow'd.

A thousand lamentable objects there,
 In scorn of Nature, Art gave lifeless life :
 Many a dry drop seem'd a weeping tear,
 Shed for the slaughter'd husband by the wife :
 The red blood reek'd to show the painter's strife ;
 And dying eyes gleam'd forth their ashy lights,
 Like dying coals burnt out in tedious nights.

There might you see the labouring pioneer
 Begrim'd with sweat, and smeared all with dust ;
 And from the towers of Troy there would appear
 The very eyes of men through loopholes thrust,
 Gazing upon the Greeks with little lust :
 Such sweet observance in this work was had,
 That one might see those far-off eyes look sad.

In great commanders grace and majesty
 You might behold, triumphing in their faces ;
 In youth, quick bearing and dexterity ;
 And here and there the painter interlaces
 Pale cowards, marching on with trembling paces ;
 Which heartless peasants did so well resemble,
 That one would swear he saw them quake and
 tremble.

In Ajax and Ulysses, O what art
 Of physiognomy might one behold !
 The face of either 'cipher'd either's heart ;
 Their face their manners most expressly told :
 In Ajax' eyes blunt rage and rigour roll'd ;

Conceited—ingenious, imaginative.

But the mild glance that sly Ulysses lent
Show'd deep regard and smiling government.

There pleading might you see grave Nestor stand,
As 't were encouraging the Greeks to fight ;
Making such sober action with his hand
That it beguil'd attention, charm'd the sight :
In speech, it seem'd, his beard all silver white
Wagg'd up and down, and from his lips did fly
Thin winding breath, which purl'd up to the sky.

About him were a press of gaping faces,
Which seem'd to swallow up his sound advice ;
All jointly listening, but with several graces,
As if some mermaid did their ears entice ;
Some high, some low, the painter was so nice :
The scalps of many, almost hid behind,
To jump up higher seem'd to mock the mind.

Here one man's hand lean'd on another's head,
His nose being shadow'd by his neighbour's ear ;
Here one being throng'd bears back, all boll'n^a and red ;
Another smother'd seems to pelt^b and swear ;
And in their rage such signs of rage they bear,
As, but for loss of Nestor's golden words,
It seem'd they would debate with angry swords.

For much imaginary work was there ;
Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,^c
That for Achilles' image stood his spear,
Grip'd in an armed hand ; himself, behind,
Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind :
A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head,
Stood for the whole to be imagined.

^a *Boll'n*—swollen.

^b *Pelt*—to be clamorous, to discharge hasty words as pellets.

^c *Kind*—natural.

And from the walls of strong-besieged Troy,
 When their brave hope, bold Hector, march'd to field,
 Stood many Trojan mothers, sharing joy
 To see their youthful sons bright weapons wield;
 And to their hope they such odd action yield,
 That through their light joy seemed to appear
 (Like bright things stain'd) a kind of heavy fear.

And, from the strond of Dardan where they fought,
 To Simois' reedy banks, the red blood ran,
 Whose waves to imitate the battle sought
 With swelling ridges; and their ranks began
 To break upon the galled shore, and than^a
 Retire again, till meeting greater ranks
 They join, and shoot their foam at Simois' banks.

To this well-painted piece is Lucrece come,
 To find a face where all distress is stel'd.^b
 Many she sees where cares have carved some,
 But none where all distress and dolour dwell'd,
 Till she despairing Hecuba beheld,
 Staring on Priam's wounds with her old eyes,
 Which bleeding under Pyrrhus' proud foot lies.

In her the painter had anatomiz'd
 Time's ruin, beauty's wrack, and grim care's reign;
 Her cheeks with chaps and wrinkles were disguis'd;
 Of what she was no semblance did remain:
 Her blue-blood chang'd to black, in every vein,

^a *Than* used for *then*.

^b *Stel'd*. A passage in the twenty-fourth Sonnet may explain the lines in the text:—

" Mine eye hath play'd the painter, and hath *stel'd*
 Thy beauty's form in table of my heart."

It appears to us that the word is connected in Shakspeare's mind with the word *stille*, the pencil by which forms are traced and copied.

Wanting the spring that those shrunk pipes had fed,
Show'd life imprison'd in a body dead.

On this sad shadow Lucrece spends her eyes,
And shapes her sorrow to the beldame's woes,
Who nothing wants to answer her but cries,
And bitter words to ban her cruel foes :
The painter was no God to lend her those ;
And therefore Lucrece swears he did her wrong,
To give her so much grief, and not a tongue.

" Poor instrument," quoth she, " without a sound,
I'll tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue :
And drop sweet balm in Priam's painted wound,
And rail on Pyrrhus that hath done him wrong,
And with my tears quench Troy that burns so long ;
And with my knife scratch out the angry eyes
Of all the Greeks that are thine enemies.

" Show me the strumpet that began this stir,
That with my nails her beauty I may tear.
Thy heat of lust, fond Paris, did incur
This load of wrath that burning Troy doth bear ;
Thy eye kindled the fire that burneth here :
And here in Troy, for trespass of thine eye,
The sire, the son, the dame, and daughter, die.

" Why should the private pleasure of some one
Become the public plague of many mo :
Let sin, alone committed, light alone
Upon his head that hath transgressed so.
Let guiltless souls be freed from guilty woe :
For one's offence why should so many fall,
To plague a private sin in general ?

"Lo, here weeps Hecuba, here Priam dies,
 Here manly Hector faints, here Troilus swoonds;^a
 Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies,
 And friend to friend gives unadvised^b wounds,
 And one man's lust these many lives confounds:^c
 Had doting Priam check'd his son's desire,
 Troy had been bright with fame, and not with fire."

Here feelingly she weeps Troy's painted woes :
 For sorrow, like a heavy-hanging bell,
 Once set on ringing, with his own weight goes ;
 Then little strength rings out the doleful knell :
 So Lucrece set a-work sad tales doth tell
 To pencill'd pensiveness and colour'd sorrow ;
 She lends them words, and she their looks doth
 borrow.

She throws her eyes about the painting, round,
 And whom she finds forlorn she doth lament :
 At last she sees a wretched image bound,
 That piteous looks to Phrygian shepherds lent ;
 His face, though full of cares, yet show'd content :
 Onward to Troy with the blunt swains he goes,
 So mild that Patience seem'd to scorn his woes.

In him the painter labour'd with his skill
 To hide deceit, and give the harmless show
 An humble gait, calm looks, eyes wailing still,
 A brow unbent, that seem'd to welcome woe ;
 Cheeks neither red nor pale, but mingled so
 That blushing red no guilty instance gave,
 Nor ashy pale the fear that false hearts have.

^a *Swoonds*—swoons. It is probable that the word was so usually pronounced. In Drayton *swoond* rhymes to *wound*.

^b *Unadvised*—unknowing.

^c *Confounds* is here used in the sense of destroys.

But, like a constant and confirmed devil,
 He entertain'd a show so seeming just,
 And therein so ensconc'd his secret evil,
 That jealousy itself could not mistrust
 False-creeping craft and perjury should thrust
 Into so bright a day such black-fac'd storms,
 Or blot with hell-born sin such saint-like forms.

The well-skill'd workman this mild image drew
 For perjurd Sinon, whose enchanting story
 The credulous old Priam after slew ;
 Whose words, like wild-fire, burnt the shining glory
 Of rich-built Ilion, that the skies were sorry,
 And little stars shat from their fixed places,
 When their glass fell wherein they view'd their faces.

This picture she advisedly * perus'd,
 And chid the painter for his wondrous skill ;
 Saying, some shape in Sinon's was abus'd,
 So fair a form lodg'd not a mind so ill ;
 And still on him she gaz'd, and gazing still,
 Such signs of truth in his plain face she spied,
 That she concludes the picture was belied.

" It cannot be," quoth she, " that so much guile"—
 (She would have said) " can lurk in such a look ;"
 But Tarquin's shape came in her mind the while,
 And from her tongue " can lurk" from " cannot" took
 " It cannot be," she in that sense forsook,
 And turn'd it thus : " It cannot be, I find,
 But such a face should bear a wicked mind :

" For even as subtle Sinon here is painted,
 So sober-sad, so weary, and so mild,
 (As if with grief or travail he had fainted,)

* *Advisedly*—attentively.

To me came Tarquin armed ; so beguil'd *
 With outward honesty, but yet defil'd
 With inward vice : as Priam him did cherish,
 So did I Tarquin ; so my Troy did perish.

* Look, look, how listening Priam wets his eyes,
 To see those borrow'd tears that Sinon sheds.
 Priam, why art thou old, and yet not wise ?
 For every tear he falls ^b a Trojan bleeds ;
 His eye drops fire, no water thence proceeds :
 Those round clear pearls of his that move thy pity
 Are balls of quenchless fire to burn thy city.

" Such devils steal effects from lightless hell ;
 For Sinon in his fire doth quake with cold,
 And in that cold hot-burning fire doth dwell ;
 These contraries such unity do hold
 Only to flatter fools, and make them bold :
 So Priam's trust false Sinon's tears doth flatter,
 That he finds means to burn his Troy with water."

Here, all enrag'd, such passion her assails,
 That patience is quite beaten from her breast.
 She tears the senseless Sinon with her nails,
 Comparing him to that unhappy guest
 Whose deed hath made herself herself detest :
 At last she smilingly with this gives o'er ;
 " Fool ! Fool !" quoth she, " his wounds will not be
 sore."

Thus ebbs and flows the current of her sorrow,
 And Time doth weary time with her complaining.
 She looks for night, and then she longs for morrow,
 And both she thinks too long with her remaining :
 Short time seems long in sorrow's sharp sustaining.

* So beguil'd—so masked with fraud.

^b Falls—lets fall.

Though woe be heavy yet it seldom sleeps ;
And they that watch see time how slow it creeps.

Which all this time hath overslipp'd her thought,
That she with painted images hath spent :
Being from the feeling of her own grief brought
By deep surmise of others' detriment ;
Losing her woes in shows of discontent.

It easeth some, though none it ever cur'd,
To think their dolour others have endur'd.

But now the mindful messenger, come back,
Brings home his lord and other company ;
Who finds his Lucrecé clad in mourning black ;
And round about her tear-distained eye
Blue circles stream'd, like rainbows in the sky.

These water-galls^a in her dim element
Foretell new storms to those already spent.

Which when her sad-beholding husband saw,
Amazedly in her sad face he stares :
Her eyes, though sod in tears, look'd red and raw,
Her lively colour kill'd with deadly cares.
He hath no power to ask her how she fares,
But stood, like old acquaintance in a trance,
Met far from home, wondering each other's chance.

At last he takes her by the bloodless hand,
And thus begins : " What uncouth ill event
Hath thee befallen, that thou dost trembling stand
Sweet love, what spite hath thy fair colour spent ?
Why art thou thus attir'd in discontent ?

Unmask, dear, dear, this moody heaviness,
And tell thy grief, that we may give redress."

^a *Water-galls*. Steevens says the word is current among the shepherds on Salisbury Plain.

Three times with sighs she gives her sorrow fire
Ere once she can discharge one word of woe :
At length address'd ^a to answer his desire,
She modestly prepares to let them know
Her honour is ta'en prisoner by the foe ;
While Collatine and his consorted lords
With sad attention long to hear her words

And now this pale swan in her watery nest
Begins the sad dirge of her certain ending :
“ Few words,” quoth she, “ shall fit the trespass best,
Where no excuse can give the fault amending ;
In me more woes than words are now depending ;
And my laments would be drawn out too long,
To tell them all with one poor tired tongue.

“ Then be this all the task it hath to say :—
Dear husband, in the interest of thy bed
A stranger came, and on that pillow lay
Where thou wast wont to rest thy weary head ;
And what wrong else may be imagined
By foul enforcement might be done to me,
From that, alas ! thy Lucrece is not free.

“ For in the dreadful dead of dark midnight,
With shining falchion in my chamber came
A creeping creature, with a flaming light,
And softly cried, Awake, thou Roman dame,
And entertain my love ; else lasting shame
On thee and thine this night I will inflict,
If thou my love's desire do contradict.

“ For some hard-favour'd groom of thine, quoth he,
Unless thou yoke thy liking to my will,
I'll murder straight, and then I'll slaughter thee,

^a *Address'd*—prepared.

And swear I found you where you did fulfil
The loathsome act of lust, and so did kill
The lechers in their deed : this act will be
My fame, and thy perpetual infamy.

“ With this I did begin to start and cry,
And then against my heart he set his sword,
Swearing unless I took all patiently
I should not live to speak another word :
So should my shame still rest upon record,
And never be forgot in mighty Rome
The adulterate death of Lucrece and her groom.

“ Mine enemy was strong, my poor self weak,
And far the weaker with so strong a fear :
My bloody judge forbade my tongue to speak ;
No rightful plea might plead for justice there :
His scarlet lust came evidence to swear
That my poor beauty had purloin'd his eyes,
And when the judge is robb'd, the prisoner dies.

“ O teach me how to make mine own excuse !
Or, at the least, this refuge let me find ;
Though my gross blood be stain'd with this abuse,
Immaculate and spotless is my mind ;
That was not forc'd ; that never was inclin'd
To accessary yieldings, but still pure
Doth in her poison'd closet yet endure.”

Lo here, the helpless merchant of this loss,
With head declin'd, and voice damm'd up with woe,
With sad-set eyes, and wretched arms across,
From lips new-waxen pale begins to blow
The grief away that stops his answer so :
But wretched as he is he strives in vain ;
What he breathes out his breath drinks up again.

As through an arch the violent roaring tide
Outruns the eye that doth behold his haste ;
Yet in the eddy boundeth in his pride
Back to the strait that forc'd him on so fast ;
In rage sent out, recall'd in rage, being past :
Even so he sighs, his sorrows make a saw,
To push grief on, and back the same grief draw.

Which speechless woe of his poor she attendeth,
And his untimely frenzy thus awaketh :
“ Dear lord, thy sorrow to my sorrow lendeth
Another power ; no flood by raining slaketh.
My woe too sensible thy passion maketh
More feeling-painful : let it then suffice
To drown one woe, one pair of weeping eyes.

“ And for my sake, when I might charm thee so,
For she that was thy Lucrece,—now attend me ;
Be suddenly revenged on my foe,
Thine, mine, his own ; suppose thou dost defend me
From what is past : the help that thou shalt lend me
Comes all too late, yet let the traitor die ;
For sparing justice feeds iniquity.

“ But ere I name him, you, fair lords,” quoth she,
(Speaking to those that came with Collatine)
“ Shall plight your honourable faiths to me,
With swift pursuit to venge this wrong of mine ;
For 't is a meritorious fair design
To chase injustice with revengeful arms :
Knights, by their oaths, should right poor ladies'
harms.”

At this request, with noble disposition
Each present lord began to promise aid,
As bound in knighthood to her imposition,

Longing to hear the hateful foe bewray'd.
 But she, that yet her sad task hath not said,
 The protestation stops. "O speak," quoth she,
 "How may this forced stain be wip'd from me?"

"What is the quality of mine offence,
 Being constrain'd with dreadful circumstance?
 May my pure mind with the foul act dispense,
 My low-declined honour to advance?
 May any terms acquit me from this chance?
 The poison'd fountain clears itself again;
 And why not I from this compelled stain?"

With this, they all at once began to say,
 Her body's stain her mind untainted clears;
 While with a joyless smile she turns away
 The face, that map which deep impression bears
 Of hard misfortune, carv'd in it with tears.
 "No, no," quoth she, "no dame, hereafter living,
 By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving."

Here with a sigh, as if her heart would break,
 She throws forth Tarquin's name: "He, he," she says,
 But more than "he" her poor tongue could not
 speak;

Till after many accents and delays,
 Untimely breathings, sick and short assays,
 She utters this: "He, he, fair lords, 't is he,
 That guides this hand to give this wound to me."

Even here she sheathed in her harmless breast
 A harmful knife, that thence her soul unsheath'd:
 That blow did bail it from the deep unrest
 Of that polluted prison where it breath'd:
 Her contrite sighs unto the clouds bequeath'd
 Her winged sprite, and through her wounds doth fly
 Life's lasting date from cancell'd destiny.

Stone-still, astonish'd with this deadly deed,
Stood Collatine and all his lordly crew;
Till Lucrece' father, that beholds her bleed,
Himself on her self-slaughter'd body threw;
And from the purple fountain Brutus drew
The murderous knife, and as it left the place,
Her blood, in poor revenge, held it in chase;

And bubbling from her breast, it doth divide
In two slow rivers, that the crimson blood
Circles her body in on every side,
Who like a late-sack'd island vastly^a stood
Bare and unpeopled, in this fearful flood.
Some of her blood still pure and red remain'd,
And some look'd black, and that false Tarquin stain'd.

About the mourning and congealed face
Of that black blood a watery rigol^b goes,
Which seems to weep upon the tainted place:
And ever since, as pitying Lucrece' woes,
Corrupted blood some watery token shows;
And blood untainted still doth red abide,
Blushing at that which is so putrefied.

"Daughter, dear daughter," old Lucretius cries,
"That life was mine which thou hast here depriv'd.
If in the child the father's image lies,
Where shall I live now Lucrece is unliv'd?
Thou wast not to this end from me deriv'd.
If children predecease progenitors,
We are their offspring, and they none of ours.

"Poor broken glass, I often did behold
In thy sweet semblance my old age new born;
But now that fair fresh mirror, dim and old,

^a Vastly—like a waste.

^b Rigol—circle.

Shows me a barebon'd death by time outworn ;
 O, from thy cheeks my image thou hast torn !
 And shiver'd all the beauty of my glass,
 That I no more can see what once I was.

" O time, cease thou thy course, and last no longer,
 If they surcease to be that should survive.
 Shall rotten death make conquest of the stronger,
 And leave the faltering feeble souls alive ?
 The old bees die, the young possess their hive :
 Then live, sweet Lucrece, live again, and see
 Thy father die, and not thy father thee !"

By this starts Collatine as from a dream,
 And bids Lucretius give his sorrow place ;
 And then in key-cold * Lucrece' bleeding stream
 He falls, and bathes the pale fear in his face,
 And counterfeits to die with her a space ;
 Till manly shame bids him possess his breath,
 And live, to be revenged on her death.

The deep vexation of his inward soul
 Hath serv'd a dumb arrest upon his tongue ;
 Who, mad that sorrow should his use control,
 Or keep him from heart-easing words so long,
 Begins to talk ; but through his lips do throng
 Weak words, so thick come, in his poor heart's aid,
 That no man could distinguish what he said.

Yet sometime Tarquin was pronounced plain,
 But through his teeth, as if the name he tore.
 This windy tempest, till it blow up rain,
 Held back his sorrow's tide, to make it more ;
 At last it rains, and busy winds give o'er :

* *Key-cold*. So in 'Richard III.,' Act I. scene 2 :—
 " Poor *key-cold* figure of a holy king."

Then son and father weep with equal strife,
Who should weep most for daughter or for wife.

The one doth call her his, the other his,
Yet neither may possess the claim they lay.
The father says, "She 's mine." "O, mine she is,"
Replies her husband: "do not take away
My sorrow's interest; let no mourner say
He weeps for her, for she was only mine,
And only must be wail'd by Collatine."

"O," quoth Lucretius, "I did give that life
Which she too early and too late^a hath spill'd."
"Woe, woe," quoth Collatine, "she was my wife,
I ow'd her, and 't is mine that she hath kill'd."
"My daughter" and "my wife" with clamours fill'd
The dispers'd air, who, holding Lucrece' life,
Answer'd their cries, "my daughter" and "my
wife."

Brutus, who pluck'd the knife from Lucrece' side,
Seeing such emulation in their woe,
Began to clothe his wit in state and pride,
Burying in Lucrece' wound his folly's show.
He with the Romans was esteemed so
As silly jeering idiots are with kings,
For sportive words, and uttering foolish things.

But now he throws that shallow habit by,
Wherein deep policy did him disguise;
And arm'd his long-hid wits advisedly,
To check the tears in Collatinus' eyes.
"Thou wronged lord of Rome," quoth he, "arise;
Let my unsounded self, suppos'd a fool,
Now set thy long-experienc'd wit to school.

^a Too late—too recently.

"Why, Collatine, is woe the cure for woe?
 Do wounds help wounds, or grief help grievous deeds?
 Is it revenge to give thyself a blow,
 For his foul act by whom thy fair wife bleeds?
 Such childish humour from weak minds proceeds:
 Thy wretched wife mistook the matter so,
 To slay herself, that should have slain her foe.

"Courageous Roman, do not steep thy heart
 In such relenting dew of lamentations,
 But kneel with me, and help to bear thy part,
 To rouse our Roman gods with invocations,
 That they will suffer these abominations,
 (Since Rome herself in them doth stand disgrac'd,)
 By our strong arms from forth her fair streets
 chas'd.

"Now, by the Capitol that we adore,
 And by this chaste blood so unjustly stain'd,
 By heaven's fair sun that breeds the fat earth's store,
 By all our country rights in Rome maintain'd,
 And by chaste Lucrece' soul that late complain'd^a
 Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody knife,
 We will revenge the death of this true wife."

This said, he struck his hand upon his breast,
 And kiss'd the fatal knife to end his vow;
 And to his protestation urg'd the rest,
 Who, wondering at him, did his words allow:^b
 Then jointly to the ground their knees they bow;
 And that deep vow which Brutus made before,
 He doth again repeat, and that they swore.

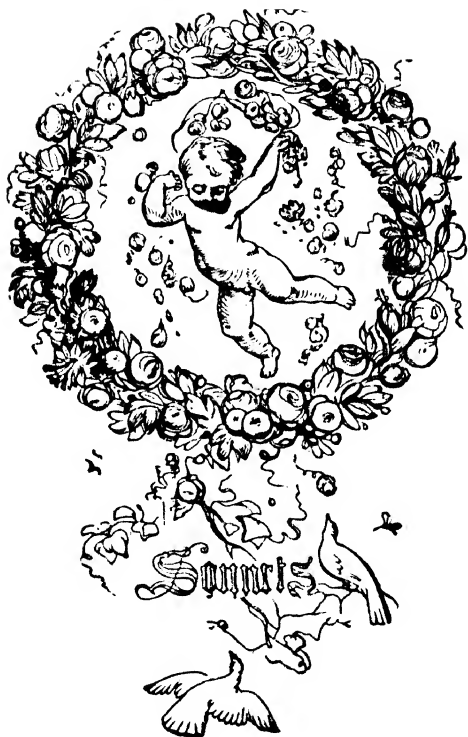
^a *Complain'd* was formerly used without a subjoined proposition.

^b *Allow*—approve.

When they had sworn to this advised doom,
They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence;
To show her bleeding body thorough Rome,
And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence:
Which being done with speedy diligence,
The Romans plausibly^a did give consent
To Tarquin's everlasting banishment.

^a *Plausibly*—with expressions of applause—with acclamation.
Plausively, *applausively*.

End of
The Rape of Lucrece.



TO
THE ONLY BEGETTER OF THESE ENSUING SONNETS,
MR. W. H.,
ALL HAPPINESS
AND
THAT ETERNITY PROMISED BY OUR EVERLIVING POET,
WISHEETH
THE WELL-WISHING ADVENTURER
IN SETTING FORTH.

T. T.*

* T. T.—that is, Thomas Thorpe, the original publisher.

SONNETS.

I.

FROM fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripen should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory :
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own buduriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

II.

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed,* of small worth held :
Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days ;
To say, within thine own deep sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserv'd thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer—"This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse—"
Proving his beauty by succession thine !

* *Weed*—garment.

This were to be new-made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

III.

Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest,
Now is the time that face should form another;
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.
For where is she so fair whose unear'd^a womb
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond^b will be the tomb
Of his self-love, to stop posterity?
Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime:
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time.
But if thou live, remember'd not to be,
Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

IV.

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?
Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,
And being frank she lends to those are free.
Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
The bounteous largess given thee to give?
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?
For having traffic with thyself alone,
Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive.
Then how, when nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable audit canst thou leave?
The un-us'd beauty must be tomb'd with thee,
Which, used, lives thy executor to be.

^a *Unear'd*—unploughed.

^b *Fond*—foolish.

V.

Those hours that with gentle work did frame
 The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
 Will play the tyrants to the very same,
 And that unfair^a which fairly doth excel;
 For never-resting time leads summer on
 To hideous winter, and confounds him there;
 Sap check'd with frost, and lusty leaves quite gone,
 Beauty o'ersnow'd, and bareness everywhere;
 Then, were not summer's distillation left,
 A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
 Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
 Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was.
 But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
 Leese^b but their show; their substance still lives
 sweet.

VI.

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface
 In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd:
 Make sweet some phial; treasure thou some place
 With beauty's treasure, ere it be self-kill'd.
 That use is not forbidden usury,
 Which happies^c those that pay the willing loan;
 That 's for thyself to breed another thee,
 Or ten times happier, be it ten for one;
 Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,
 If ten of thine ten times refigur'd thee:
 Then what could death do if thou shouldst depart,
 Leaving thee living in posterity?
 Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair
 To be Death's conquest, and make worms thine
 heir.

^a *Unfair*—a verb—deprive of fairness, of beauty.

^b *Leese*—lose.

^c *Happies*—makes happy.

VII.

Lo, in the orient when the gracious light
 Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
 Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
 Serving with looks his sacred majesty ;
 And having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill,
 Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
 Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
 Attending on his golden pilgrimage ;
 But when from high-inost pitch, with weary car,
 Like feeble age, he reeleth from the day,
 The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are
 From his low tract, and look another way :
 So thou, thyself outgoing in thy noon,
 Unlook'd on diest, unless thou get a son.

VIII.

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly ?^a
 Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
 Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly ?
 Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy ?
 If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
 By unions married, do offend thine ear,
 They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
 In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
 Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
 Strikes each in each by mutual ordering ;^b
 Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
 Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing :
 Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
 Sings this to thee, " thou single wilt prove none."

^a Malone thus explains this passage :—" O thou whom to hear is music, why hear'st thou," &c.

^b If two strings are tuned in perfect unison, and one only is struck, a very sensible vibration takes place in the other. This is called sympathetic vibration.

IX.

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye
 That thou consum'st thyself in single life ?
 Ah ! if thou issueless shalt hap to die,
 The world will wail thee, like a makeless* wife :
 The world will be thy widow, and still weep
 That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
 When every private widow well may keep,
 By children's eyes, her husband's shape in mind.
 Look, what an unthrift in the world doth spend
 Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it ;
 But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
 And kept unus'd, the user so destroys it.
 No love toward others in that bosom sits,
 That on himself such murderous shame commits.

X.

For shame ! deny that thou bear'st love to any,
 Who for thyself art so unprovident.
 Grant if thou wilt thou art belov'd of many,
 But that thou none lov'st is most evident ;
 For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate,
 That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,
 Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate,
 Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
 O change thy thought, that I may change my mind !
 Shall hate be fairer lodg'd than gentle love ?
 Be, as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
 Or to thyself, at least, kind-hearted prove ;
 Make thee another self, for love of me,
 That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

* *Makeless*—mateless. Make and mate are synonymous in our elder writers.

XI.

As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou grow'st
 In one of thine, from that which thou departest ;
 And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st,
 Thou mayst call thine, when thou from youth convertest.

Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase ;
 Without this, folly, age, and cold decay :
 If all were minded so the times should cease,
 And threescore years would make the world away.
 Let those whom Nature hath not made for store,
 Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish :
 Look whom she best endow'd, she gave thee more ;
 Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish ;
 She carv'd thee for her seal, and meant thereby
 Thou shouldst print more, nor let that copy die.

XII.

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
 And see the brave day sunk in hideous night ;
 When I behold the violet past prime,
 And sable curls, all^a silver'd o'er with white ;
 When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
 Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
 And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
 Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard ;
 Then of thy beauty do I question make,
 That thou among the wastes of time must go,
 Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,
 And die as fast as they see others grow ;
 And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
 Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

^a All. The original has *ov*.

XIII.

O that you were yourself! but, love, you are
No longer yours than you yourself here live :
Against this coming end you should prepare,
And your sweet semblance to some other give.
So should that beauty which you hold in lease
Find no determination : then you were
Yourself again, after yourself's decease,
When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honour might uphold
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day,
And barren rage of death's eternal cold ?
O! none but unthrifths :—Dear my love, you know
You had a father; let your son say so.

XIV.

Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck ;
And yet methinks I have astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or season's quality :
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
Pointing to each his thunder, rain, and wind,
Or say with princes if it shall go well,
By oft predict that I in heaven find :
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And (constant stars) in them I read such art,
As truth and beauty shall together thrive,
If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert :
Or else of thee this I prognosticate,
Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

XV.

When I consider everything that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,

T

That this huge state presenteth nought but shows
 Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
 When I perceive that men as plants increase,
 Cheered and check'd even by the selfsame sky;
 Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
 And wear their brave state out of memory;
 Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
 Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
 Where wasteful time debateth with decay,
 To change your day of youth to sullied night;
 And, all in war with Time, for love of you,
 As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

XVI.

But wherefore do not you a mightier way
 Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time?
 And fortify yourself in your decay
 With means more blessed than my barren rhyme?
 Now stand you on the top of happy hours;
 And many maiden gardens, yet unset,
 With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers,
 Much liker than your painted counterfeit:^a
 So should the lines of life that life repair,
 Which this, Time's pencil, or my pupil pen,
 Neither in inward worth, nor outward fair,^b
 Can make you live yourself in eyes of men.
 To give away yourself keeps yourself still;
 And you must live, drawn by your own sweet skill.

XVII.

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
 If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?
 Though yet, Heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
 Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts.

^a *Counterfeit*—portrait.

^b *Fair*—beauty. The word is used in the same sense in the 18th Sonnet.

If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
 And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
 The age to come would say, this poet lies,
 Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces.
 So should my papers, yellow'd with their age,
 Be scorn'd, like old men of less truth than tongue ;
 And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage,
 And stretched metre of an antique song :
 But were some child of yours alive that time,
 You should live twice ;—in it, and in my rhyme.

XVIII.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day ?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate :
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date :
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd ;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd ;^a
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest ;
 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou growest ;
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
 And make the earth devour her own sweet brood ;
 Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
 And burn the long-liv'd phoenix in her blood ;
 Make glad and sorry seasons, as thou fleet'st,
 And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
 To the wide world, and all her fading sweets ;
 But I forbid thee one most heinous crime :

^a *Untrimm'd*—undecorated.

O carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
 Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
 Him in thy course untainted do allow,
 For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.

Yet, do thy worst, old Time : despite thy wrong,
 My love shall in my verse ever live young.

XX.

A woman's face, with nature's own hand painted,
 Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;
 A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
 With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;
 An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
 Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
 A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,
 Which steals men's eyes, and women's souls amazeth.
 And for a woman wert thou first created;
 Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,
 And by addition me of thee defeated,
 By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.

But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,
 Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

So is it not with me as with that muse,
 Stirr'd by a painted beauty to his verse;
 Who heaven itself for ornament doth use,
 And every fair with his fair doth rehearse;
 Making a couplement^a of proud compare,
 With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
 With April's firstborn flowers, and all things rare
 That heaven's air in his huge rondure^b hems.
 O let me, true in love, but truly write,
 And then believe me, my love is as fair
 As any mother's child, though not so bright
 As those gold candles fix'd in heaven's air:

^a *Couplement*—union.

^b *Rondure*—circumference.

Let them say more that like of hearsay well ;
I will not praise, that purpose not to sell.

XXII.

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,
So long as youth and thou are of one date ;
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
Then look I death my days should expiate.
For all that beauty that doth cover thee
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me ;
How can I then be elder than thou art ?
O therefore, love, be of thyself so wary,
As I not for myself but for thee will ;
Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary
As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain ;
Thou gav'st me thine, not to give back again.

XXIII.

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his fear is put besides his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart ;
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharg'd with burthen of mine own love's might.
O let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast ;
Who plead for love, and look for recompence,
More than that tongue that more hath more ex-
press'd.
O learn to read what silent love hath writ :
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

XXIV.

Mine eye hath play'd the painter, and hath stel'd
Thy beauty's form in table^a of my heart ;
My body is the frame wherein 't is held,
And perspective it is best painter's art.
For through the painter must you see his skill,
To find where your true image pictur'd lies,
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,
That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.
Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done ;
Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me
Are windows to my breast, where-through the sun
Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee ;
Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art,
They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

XXV.

Let those who are in favour with their stars,
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye ;
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once soild,
Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd :
Then happy I, that love and am belov'd
Where I may not remove, nor be remov'd.

^a *Table*, though sometimes used in the sense of a picture, more commonly means the tabular surface upon which a picture is painted.

XXVI.

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written embassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit.
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it ;
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it :
Till whatsoever star that guides by moving,
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,
And puts apparel on my tatter'd loving,
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect :
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee,
Till then, not show my head where thou mayst prove me.

XXVII.

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tir'd ;
But then begins a journey in my head,
To work my mind, when body's work 's expir'd :
For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see :
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new.
Lo, thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.

XXVIII.

How can I then return in happy plight,
That am debarr'd the benefit of rest ?
When day's oppression is not eas'd by night,
But day by night and night by day oppress'd ?

And each, though enemies to either's reign,
 Do in consent shake hands to torture me,
 The one by toil, the other to complain
 How far I toil, still farther off from thee.
 I tell the day, to please him, thou art bright,
 And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven :
 So flatter I the swart-complexion'd night ;
 When sparkling stars twire^a not, thou gild'st the even.
 But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
 And night doth nightly make grief's length seem
 stronger.

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,
 And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
 Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least ;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
 Madly I think on thee,—and then my state
 (Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate ;
 For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings,
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
 I summon up remembrance of things past,
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste :

^a *Twire*. Gifford, in a note upon Ben Jonson's 'Sad Shepherd,' explains that in the passage before us the meaning is "when the stars do not gleam or appear at intervals."

Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless^a night,
 And weep afresh love's long-since cancell'd woe,
 And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight.^b
 Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
 The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
 All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end.

Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts,
 Which I by lacking have supposed dead;
 And there reigns love and all love's loving parts,
 And all those friends which I thought buried.
 How many a holy and obsequious^c tear
 Hath dear religious love stolen from mine eye,
 As interest of the dead, which now appear
 But things remov'd, that hidden in thee lie!
 Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
 Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
 Who all their parts of me to thee did give;
 That due of many now is thine alone:
 Their images I lov'd I view in thee,
 And thou (all they) hast all the all of me.

XXXII.

If thou survive my well-contented day,
 When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,
 And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
 These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,

^a *Dateless*—endless—having no certain time of expiration.

^b If we understand *expense* to be used as analogous to *passing away*, there is no difficulty in this line. What we expend is gone from us; and so the poet means the *expense* of many a vanished sight.

^c *Obsequious*—funereal.

Compare them with the bettering of the time ;
 And though they be outstripp'd by every pen,
 Reserve^a them for my love, not for their rhyme,
 Exceeded by the height of happier men.
 O then vouchsafe me but this loving thought !
 " Had my friend's muse grown with this growing age,
 A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
 To march in ranks of better equipage :
 But since he died, and poets better prove,
 Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love."

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
 Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
 Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
 Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchymy ;
 Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
 With ugly rack^b on his celestial face,
 And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
 Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace :
 Even so my sun one early morn did shine
 With all triumphant splendour on my brow ;
 But out ! alack ! he was but one hour mine,
 The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
 Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth ;
 Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun
 staineth.^c

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
 And make me travel forth without my cloak,

^a *Reserve*—the same as *preserve*.

^b *Rack*. Tooke, in his full discussion of the meaning of this word, holds that *rack* means "merely that which is *recked*."

^c *Stain* and *staineth* are here used with the signification of a verb neuter. Suns of the world may be stained as heaven's sun is stained.

To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
'T is not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace :
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief ;
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss :
The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's cross.
Ah! but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.

No more be griev'd at that which thou hast done :
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud ;
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
All men make faults, and even I in this,
Authorising thy trespass with compare,
Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,^a
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are :
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense,
(Thy adverse party is thy advocate,)
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence :
Such civil war is in my love and hate,
That I an accessory needs must be
To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.

Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one :
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
Without thy help, by me be borne alone.

Amiss—fault.

In our two loves there is but one respect,
 Though in our lives a separable^a spite,
 Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
 Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
 I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
 Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame;
 Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
 Unless thou take that honour from thy name :
 But do not so ; I love thee in such sort,
 As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

As a decrepit father takes delight
 To see his active child do deeds of youth,
 So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite,
 Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth ;
 For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
 Or any of these all, or all, or more,
 Entitled in thy parts do crowned sit,
 I make my love engrafted to this store :
 So then I am not lame, poor, nor despis'd,
 Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give,
 That I in thy abundance am suffic'd,
 And by a part of all thy glory live.

Look what is best, that best I wish in thee :
 This wish I have ; then ten times happy me !

XXXVIII.

How can my muse want subject to invent,
 While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
 Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
 For every vulgar paper to rehearse ?
 O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me
 Worthy perusal stand against thy sight ;
 For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
 When thou thyself dost give invention light ?

Separable—separating.

Be thou the tenth muse, ten times more in worth
 Than those old nine which rhymers invoke;
 And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
 Eternal numbers to outlive long date.

If my slight muse do please these curious days,
 The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

XXXIX.

O, how thy worth with manners may I sing,
 When thou art all the better part of me?
 What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
 And what is 't but mine own, when I praise thee?
 Even for this let us divided live,
 And our dear love lose name of single one,
 That by this separation I may give
 That due to thee, which thou deserv'st alone.
 O absence, what a torment wouldst thou prove,
 Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave
 To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
 (Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive,)
 And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
 By praising him here, who doth hence remain!

XL.

Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all;
 What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?
 No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call;
 All mine was thine, before thou hadst this more.
 Then if for my love thou my love receivest,
 I cannot blame thee for^a my love thou usest;
 But yet be blam'd, if thou thyself deceivest
 By wilful taste of what thyself refuseth.
 I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,
 Although thou steal thee all my poverty;

^a For here signifies because.

And yet, love knows, it is a greater grief
 To bear love's wrong, than hate's known injury.
 Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,
 Kill me with spites ; yet we must not be foes.

XLI.

Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits
 When I am sometime absent from thy heart,
 Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,
 For still temptation follows where thou art.
 Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won,
 Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assail'd ;
 And when a woman woos, what woman's son
 Will sourly leave her till she have prevail'd ?
 Ah me ! but yet thou mightst my seat forbear,
 And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,
 Who lead thee in their riot even there
 Where thou art forc'd to break a two-fold truth ;
 Hers, by thy beauty tempting her to thee,
 Thine, by thy beauty being false to me.

XLI.I.

That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,
 And yet it may be said I lov'd her dearly ;
 That she hath thee, is of my wailing chief,
 A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
 Loving offenders, thus I will excuse ye :—
 Thou dost love her, because thou knew'st I love her ;
 And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,
 Suffering my friend for my sake to approve her.
 If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,
 And, losing her, my friend hath found that loss ;
 Both find each other, and I lose both twain,
 And both for my sake lay on me this cross :
 But here 's the joy ; my friend and I are one ;
 Sweet flattery ! then she loves but me alone.

XLIII.

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
 For all the day they view things unrespected;^a
 But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
 And, darkly bright, are bright in dark directed;
 Then thou whose shadow shadows doth make bright,
 How would thy shadow's form form happy show
 To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
 When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so!
 How would (I say) mine eyes be blessed made
 By looking on thee in the living day,
 When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
 Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay?
 All days are nights to see, till I see thee,
 And nights, bright days, when dreams do show thee
 me.^b

XLIV.

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
 Injurious distance should not stop my way;
 For then, despite of space, I would be brought
 From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
 No matter then, although my foot did stand
 Upon the farthest earth remov'd from thee,
 For nimble thought can jump both sea and land,
 As soon as think the place where he would be.
 But ah! thought kills me, that I am not thought,
 To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,
 But that, so much of earth and water wrought,^c
 I must attend time's leisure with my moan;
 Receiving nought by elements so slow
 But heavy tears, badges of either's woe:

^a *Unrespected*—unregarded.^b *Thee me*—thee to me.^c A passage in *Henry V.* explains this:—"He is pure air and fire; and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him."

XLV.

The other two, slight air and purging fire,
 Are both with thee, wherever I abide ;
 The first my thought, the other my desire,
 These present-absent with swift motion slide.
 For when these quicker elements are gone
 In tender embassy of love to thee,
 My life, being made of four, with two alone
 Sinks down to death, oppress'd with melancholy ;
 Until life's composition be recur'd
 By those swift messengers return'd from thee,
 Who even but now come back again, assur'd
 Of thy fair health, recounting it to me :
 This told, I joy ; but then no longer glad,
 I send them back again, and straight grow sad.

XLVI.

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war,
 How to divide the conquest of thy sight ;
 Mine eye my heart thy^a picture's sight would bar,
 My heart mine eye the freedom of that right.
 My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie,
 (A closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes.)
 But the defendant doth that plea deny,
 And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
 To 'cide^b this title is impannelled
 A quest^c of thoughts, all tenants to the heart ;
 And by their verdict is determined
 The clear eye's moiety,^d and the dear heart's part :

^a *Thy*. The original has *their* ; and it is remarkable that the same typographical error occurs four times in this one Sonnet—a pretty convincing proof that no competent or authorised person superintended the publication.

^b *'Cide*. Malone explains that this is a contraction of *decide*. The original reads *side*.

^c *Quest*—inquest or jury.

^d *Moiety*—portion.

As thus ; mine eye's due is thine outward part,
And my heart's right thine inward love of heart.

XLVII.

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,
And each doth good turns now unto the other :
When that mine eye is famish'd for a look,
Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,
With my love's picture then my eye doth feast,
And to the painted banquet bids my heart ;
Another time mine eye is my heart's guest,
And in his thoughts of love doth share a part :
So, either by thy picture or my love,
Thyself away art present still with me ;
For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,
And I am still with them, and they with thee ;
Or if they sleep, thy picture in my sight
Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight.

XLVIII.

How careful was I when I took my way,
Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,
That, to my use, it might unused stay
From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust !
But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,
Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,
Thou, best of dearest, and mine only care,
Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.
Thee have I not lock'd up in any chest,
Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art,
Within the gentle closure of my breast,
From whence at pleasure thou mayst come and part ;
And even thence thou wilt be stolen I fear,
For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

XLIX.

Against that time, if ever that time come,
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,

Whenas^a thy love hath cast his utmost sum,
 Call'd to that audit by advis'd respects;
 Against that time, when thou shalt strangely pass,
 And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye,
 When love, converted from the thing it was,
 Shall reasons find of settled gravity;
 Against that time do I ensconce^b me here
 Within the knowledge of mine own desert,
 And this my hand against myself uprear,
 To guard the lawful reasons on thy part :
 To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws,
 Since, why to love, I can allege no cause.

I..

How heavy do I journey on the way,
 When what I seek—my weary travel's end—
 Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
 " Thus far the miles are measur'd from thy friend !"
 The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
 Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
 As if by some instinct the wretch did know
 His rider lov'd not speed, being made from thee :
 The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
 That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
 Which heavily he answers with a groan,
 More sharp to me than spurring to his side ;
 For that same groan doth put this in my mind,
 My grief lies onward, and my joy behind.

I.I.

Thus can my love excuse the slow offence
 Of my dull bearer, when from thee I speed :
 From where thou art why should I haste me thence ?
 Till I return, of posting is no need.
 O, what excuse will my poor beast then find,
 When swift extremity can seem but slow ?

^a *Whenas*—when.^b *Ensconce*—fortify.

Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind ;
 In winged speed no motion shall I know :
 Then can no horse with my desire keep pace ;
 Therefore desire, of perfect love being made,
 Shall neigh (no dull flesh) in his fiery race ;
 But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade ;
 Since from thee going he went wilful slow,
 Towards thee I 'll run, and give him leave to go.

LII.

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key
 Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
 The which he will not every hour survey,
 For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
 Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
 Since seldom coming, in the long year set,
 Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
 Or captain^a jewels in the carcanet.^b
 So is the time that keeps you, as my chest,
 Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
 To make some special instant special-blest,
 By new unfolding his imprison'd pride.
 Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
 Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.

LIII.

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
 That millions of strange shadows on you tend ?
 Since every one hath, every one, one's shade,
 And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
 Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit^c
 Is poorly imitated after you ;

Captain—used adjectively for *chief*.

^b *Carcanet*—necklace.

^c *Counterfeit*—portrait.

SUP. VOL.

K

On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
 And you in Grecian tires are painted new :
 Speak of the spring, and foizon of the year ;^a
 The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
 The other as your bounty doth appear,
 And you in every blessed shape we know.
 In all external grace you have some part,
 But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

LIV.

O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem,
 By that sweet ornament which truth doth give !
 The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
 For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
 The canker-blooms^b have full as deep a dye
 As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
 Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
 When summer's breath their masked buds discloses :
 But, for their virtue only is their show,
 They live unwoo'd, and unrespected fade ;
 Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so ;
 Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made :
 And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
 When that shall fade, by verse distils your truth.

LV.

Not marble, not the gilded monuments
 Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme ;
 But you shall shine more bright in these contents
 Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
 When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
 And broils root out the work of masonry,
 Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
 The living record of your memory.

^a *Foizon* is plenty ; and the *foizon of the year* is the autumn, or plentiful season.

^b *Canker-blooms*—the flowers of the canker or dog-rose.

'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
 Shall you pace forth ; your praise shall still find room,
 Even in the eyes of all posterity
 That wear this world out to the ending doom.
 So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
 You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

Sweet love, renew thy force ; be it not said,
 Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,
 Which but to-day by feeding is allay'd,
 To-morrow sharpen'd in his former might :
 So, love, be thou : although to-day thou fill
 Thy hungry eyes, even till they wink with fulness,
 To-morrow see again, and do not kill
 The spirit of love with a perpetual dulness.
 Let this sad interim like the ocean be
 Which parts the shore, where two contracted-new
 Come daily to the banks, that, when they see
 Return of love, more blest may be the view ;
 Or call it winter, which, being full of care,
 Makes summer's welcome thrice more wish'd, more

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
 Upon the hours and times of your desire ?
 I have no precious time at all to spend,
 Nor services to do, till you require.
 Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour,
 Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
 Nor think the bitterness of absence sour,
 When you have bid your servant once adieu ;
 Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
 Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
 But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought,
 Save, where you are how happy you make those :

So true a fool is love, that in your will
(Though you do anything) he thinks no ill.

LVIII.

That God forbid, that made me first your slave,
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
Or at your hand the account of hours to crave,
Being your vassal, bound to stay your leisure !
O, let me suffer (being at your beck)
The imprison'd absence of your liberty,
And patience, tame to sufferance, bide each check
Without accusing you of injury.
Be where you list ; your charter is so strong,
That you yourself may privilege your time :
Do what you will, to you it doth belong
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.

I am to wait, though waiting so be hell ;
Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.

LIX.

If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguil'd,
Which labouring for invention bear amiss
The second burthen of a former child !
O, that record could with a backward look,
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
Show me your image in some antique book,
Since mind at first in character was done !
That I might see what the old world could say
To this composed wonder of your frame ;
Whether we are mended, or wher^e better they,
Or whether revolution be the same.

O ! sure I am, the wits of former days
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

W^hat^r—whether.

LX.

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
 So do our minutes hasten to their end ;
 Each changing place with that which goes before,
 In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
 Nativity, once in the main of light,^a
 Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
 Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
 And Time, that gave, doth now his gift confound.
 Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
 And delves the parallels in beauty's brow ;
 Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.
 And yet, to times in hope, my verse shall stand,
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

LXI.

Is it thy will thy image should keep open
 My heavy eyelids to the weary night ?
 Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
 While shadows, like to thee, do mock my sight ?
 Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee
 So far from home, into my deeds to pry ;
 To find out shames and idle hours in me,
 The scope and tenor of thy jealousy ?
 O no ! thy love, though much, is not so great ;
 It is my love that keeps mine eye awake ;
 Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,
 To play the watch man ever for thy sake :
 For thee watch I, whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
 From me far off, with others all-too-near.

* *Main of light.* As the main of waters would signify the great body of waters, so the main of light signifies the mass or flood of light, into which a new-born child is launched.

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye,
 And all my soul, and all my every part;
 And for this sin there is no remedy,
 It is so grounded inward in my heart.
 Methinks no face so gracious^a is as mine,
 No shape so true, no truth of such account,
 And for myself mine own worth do define,
 As I all other in all worths surmount.
 But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
 Beated^b and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity,
 Mine own self-love quite contrary I read,
 Self so self-loving were iniquity.
 'T is thee (myself) that for myself I praise,
 Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

Against my love shall be, as I am now,
 With Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn;
 When hours have drain'd his blood, and fill'd his
 brow
 With lines and wrinkles; when his youthful morn
 Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night;
 And all those beauties, whereof now he's king,
 Are vanishing or vanish'd out of sight,
 Stealing away the treasure of his spring;
 For such a time do I now fortify
 Against confounding age's cruel knife,
 That he shall never cut from memory
 My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life.
 His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
 And they shall live, and he in them, still green.

^a *Gracious*—beautiful.

^b *Beated*, used as the participle of the verb to beat.

LXIV.

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defac'd
 The rich-proud cost of outworn buried age ;
 When sometime lofty towers I see down-ras'd,
 And brass eternal, slave to mortal rage ;
 When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
 Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
 And the firm soil win of the wat'ry main,
 Increasing store with loss, and loss with store ;
 When I have seen such interchange of state,
 Or state itself confounded to decay ;
 Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminatè—
 That time will come and take my love away.
 This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
 But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

LXV.

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
 But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
 How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
 Whose action is no stronger than a flower ?
 O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
 Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
 When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
 Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays ?
 O fearful meditation ; where, alack !
 Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid ?
 Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back ?
 Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid ?

* In *Troilus and Cressida*, Ulysses says—

“ Time hath, my lord, a *wallet* at his back,
 In which he puts alms for oblivion.”

Time's *chest* and Time's *wallet* are the same ; they are the depositories of what was once great and beautiful, passed away, perished, and forgotten.

O none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,—
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,^a
And captive good attending captain ill :
Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

Ah! wherefore with infection should he live,
And with his presence grace impiety,
That sin by him advantage should achieve,
And lace^b itself with his society ?
Why should false painting imitate his cheek,
And steal dead seeing of his living hue ?
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
Roses of shadow, since his rose^c is true ?
Why should he live now Nature bankrupt is,
Beggar'd of blood to blush through lively veins ?
For she hath no exchequer now but his,
And, proud of many, lives upon his gains.
O, him she stores, to show what wealth she had
In days long since, before these last so bad.

^a *Simplicity* is here used for folly.

^b *Lace*—embellish—ornament.

LXVIII.

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,
 When beauty liv'd and died as flowers do now,
 Before these bastard signs of fair^a were borne,
 Or durst inhabit on a living brow ;
 Before the golden tresses of the dead,
 The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,
 To live a second life on second head,
 Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay :
 In him those holy antique hours are seen,
 Without all ornament, itself, and true,
 Making no summer of another's green,
 Robbing no old to dress his beauty new ;
 And him as for a map doth Nature store,
 To show false Art what beauty was of yore.

LXIX.

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view
 Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend :
 All tongues (the voice of souls) give thee that due,
 Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.
 Thine outward thus with outward praise is crown'd ;
 But those same tongues that give thee so thine own,
 In other accents do this praise confound,
 By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.
 They look into the beauty of thy mind,
 And that, in guess, they measure by thy deeds ;
 Then (churls) their thoughts, although their eyes were
 kind,
 To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds :
 But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
 The solve^b is this,—that thou dost common grow.

^a Fair—beauty.

^b Solve. Malone reads *soloe* in the sense of *solution*. We have no parallel example of the use of *soloe* as a noun.

LXX.

That thou art blam'd shall not be thy defect,
 For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;
 The ornament of beauty is suspect,^a
 A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.
 So thou be good, slander doth but approve
 Thy worth the greater, being woo'd of time;
 For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
 And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.
 Thou hast pass'd by the ambush of young days,
 Either not assail'd, or victor being charg'd;
 Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,
 To tie up envy, evermore enlarg'd:
 If some suspect of ill mask'd not thy show,
 Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.^b

LXXI.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
 Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
 Give warning to the world that I am fled
 From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
 Nay, if you read this line, remember not
 The hand that writ it: for I love you so,
 That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
 If thinking on me then should make you woe.
 O if (I say) you look upon this verse,
 When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
 Do not so much as my poor name rehearse;
 But let your love even with my life decay:
 Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
 And mock you with me after I am gone.

LXXII.

O, lest the world should task you to recite
 What merit liv'd in me, that you should love

^a *Suspect*—suspicion.^b *Owe*—own.

After my death,—dear love, forget me quite,
For you in me can nothing worthy prove ;
Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceased I
Than niggard truth would willingly impart :
O, lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me nor you.
For I am sham'd by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

LXXIII.

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long :

LXXIV.

But be contented : when that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee.

The earth can have but earth, which is his due ;
 My spirit is thine, the better part of me :
 So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
 The prey of worms, my body being dead ;
 The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
 Too base of thee to be remembered.

The worth of that, is that which it contains,
 And that is this, and this with thee remains.

So are you to my thoughts, as food to life,
 Or as sweet-season'd showers are to the ground ;
 And for the peace of you I hold such strife
 As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found :
 Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon
 Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure ;
 Now counting best to be with you alone,
 Then better'd that the world may see my pleasure :
 Sometime all full with feasting on your sight,
 And by and by clean starved for a look ;
 Possessing or pursuing no delight,
 Save what is had or must from you be took.

Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
 Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

LXXVI.

Why is my verse so barren of new pride ?
 So far from variation or quick change ?
 Why, with the time, do I not glance aside
 To new-found methods and to compounds strange ?
 Why write I still all one, ever the same,
 And keep invention in a noted weed,^a
 That every word doth almost tell my name,
 Showing their birth, and where they did proceed ?

^a *A noted weed*—a dress known and familiar, through being always the same.

O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
 And you and love are still my argument ;
 So all my best is dressing old words new,
 Spending again what is already spent :
 For as the sun is daily new and old,
 So is my love still telling what is told.

LXXVII.

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
 Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste ;
 The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
 And of this book this learning mayst thou taste.
 The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show,
 Of mouthed graves will give thee memory ;
 Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know
 Time's thievish progress to eternity.
 Look, what thy memory cannot contain,
 Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
 Those children nurs'd, deliver'd from thy brain,
 To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.
 These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
 Shall profit thee, and much enrich thy book.

LXXVIII.

So oft have I invok'd thee for my muse,
 And found such fair assistance in my verse,
 As every alien pen hath got my use,
 And under thee their poesy disperse.
 Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,
 And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
 Have added feathers to the learned's wing,
 And raised even ignorance to the sky.
 Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
 Whose influence is thine, and born of thee :
 In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
 And arts with thy sweet graces graced be ;
 But thou art all my art, and dost advance
 As high as learning my rude ignorance.

LXXIX.

Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,
 My verse alone had all thy gentle grace;
 But now my gracious numbers are decay'd,
 And my sick muse doth give another place.
 I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument
 Deserves the travail of a worthier pen;
 Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent,
 He robs thee of, and pays it thee again.
 He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word
 From thy behaviour; beauty doth he give,
 And found it in thy cheek; he can afford
 No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.
 Then thank him not for that which he doth say,
 Since what he owes thee thou thyself dost pay.

LXXX.

O, how I faint when I of you do write,
 Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
 And in the praise thereof spends all his might,
 To make me tongue-tied, speaking of your fame!
 But since your worth (wide as the ocean is)
 The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
 My saucy bark, inferior far to his,
 On your broad main doth wilfully appear.
 Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
 Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride;
 Or, being wreck'd, I am a worthless boat,
 He of tall building, and of goodly pride:
 Then if he thrive, and I be cast away,
 The worst was this;—my love was my decay.

LXXXI.

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
 Or you survive when I in earth am rotten;
 From hence your memory death cannot take,
 Although in me each part will be forgotten.

Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
 Though I, once gone, to all the world must die :
 The earth can yield me but a common grave,
 When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
 Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
 Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read ;
 And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse,
 When all the breathers of this world are dead ;
 You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
 Where breath most breathes,—even in the mouths of
 men.

LXXXII.

I grant thou wert not married to my muse,
 And therefore mayst without attaint o'erlook
 The dedicated words which writers use
 Of their fair subject, blessing every book.
 Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
 Finding thy worth a limit past my praise ;
 And therefore art enforc'd to seek anew
 Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days.
 And do so, love ; yet when they have devis'd
 What strained touches rhetoric can lend,
 Thou truly fair wert truly sympathiz'd,
 In true plain words, by thy true-telling friend ;
 And their gross painting might be better us'd
 Where cheeks need blood ; in thee it is abus'd.

LXXXIII.

I never saw that you did painting need,
 And therefore to your fair no painting set.
 I found, or thought I found, you did exceed
 The barren tender of a poet's debt :
 And therefore have I slept in your report,
 That you yourself, being extant, well might show
 How far a modern^a quill doth come too short,
 Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow.

^a *Modern*—trite—common.

This silence for my sin you did impute,
 Which shall be most my glory, being dumb;
 For I impair not beauty being mute,
 When others would give life, and bring a tomb.
 There lives more life in one of your fair eyes
 Than both your poets can in praise devise.

LXXXIV.

Who is it that says most? which can say more
 Than this rich praise,—that you alone are you?
 In whose confine immured is the store
 Which should example where your equal grew?
 Lean penury within that pen doth dwell,
 That to his subject lends not some small glory;
 But he that writes of you, if he can tell
 That you are you, so dignifies his story,
 Let him but copy what in you is writ,
 Not making worse what nature made so clear,
 And such a counterpart shall fame his wit,
 Making his style admired everywhere.
 You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
 Being fond on praise, which makes your praises
 worse.

LXXXV.

My tongue-tied muse in manners holds her still,
 While comments of your praise, richly compil'd,
 Reserve* their character with golden quill,
 And precious phrase by all the muses fil'd.
 I think good thoughts, while others write good words,
 And, like unletter'd clerk, still cry "Amen"
 To every hymn that able spirit affords,
 In polish'd form of well-refined pen.
 Hearing you prais'd, I say, " 'T is so, 't is true,"
 And to the most of praise add something more;
 But that is in my thought, whose love to you,
 Though words come hindmost, holds his rank before.

*. *Reserve* is here again used for *preserve*.

Then others for the breath of words respect,
Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

LXXXVI.

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you,
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhere,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
Giving him aid, my verse astonished.
He, nor that affable familiar ghost
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence,^a
As victors, of my silence cannot boast;
I was not sick of any fear from thence.

But when your countenance fil'd^b up his line
Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine.

LXXXVII.

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate;
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving,
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgment making.

Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but, waking, no such matter.

^a Steevens conjectures that this is an allusion to Dr. Dee's pretended intercourse with a familiar spirit.

^b *Fil'd*—gave the last polish.

LXXXVIII.

When thou shalt be dispos'd to set me light,
And place my merit in the eye of scorn,
Upon thy side against myself I 'll fight,
And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn.
With mine own weakness being best acquainted,
Upon thy part I can set down a story
Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attainted;
That thou, in losing me, shalt win much glory:
And I by this will be a gainer too;
For bending all my loving thoughts on thee,
The injuries that to myself I do,
Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me.
Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.

LXXXIX.

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence:
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,
Against thy reasons making no defence.
Thou canst not, love, disgrace me half so ill,
To set a form upon desired change,
As I 'll myself disgrace: knowing thy will,
I will acquaintance strangle, and look strange:
Be absent from thy walks; and in my tongue
Thy sweet-beloved name no more shall dwell;
Lest I (too much profane) should do it wrong,
And haply of our old acquaintance tell.
For thee, against myself I 'll vow debate,
For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.

XC.

Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now;
Now while the world is bent my deeds to cross,

Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss :
Ah! do not, when my heart hath scap'd this sorrow
Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purpos'd overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite,
But in the onset come ; so shall I taste
At first the very worst of fortune's might ;
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compar'd with loss of thee will not seem so.

XCI.

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force ;
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill ;
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse ;
And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure,
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest ;
But these particulars are not my measure,
All these I better in one general best.
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
Of more delight than hawks or horses be ;
And, having thee, of all men's pride I boast.
Wretched in this alone, that thou mayst take
All this away, and me most wretched make.

XCII.

But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
For term of life thou art assured mine ;
And life no longer than thy love will stay,
For it depends upon that love of thine.
Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,
When in the least of them my life hath end.

I see a better state to me belongs
Than that which on thy humour doth depend.
Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.
O what a happy title do I find,
Happy to have thy love, happy to die !
But what 's so blessed-fair that fears no blot ?—
Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not :

XCIII.

So shall I live, supposing thou art true,
Like a deceived husband ; so love's face
May still seem love to me, though alter'd-new ;
Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place :
For there can live no hatred in thine eye,
Therefore in that I cannot know thy change.
In many's looks the false heart's history
Is writ, in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange ;
But Heaven in thy creation did decree
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell ;
Whate'er thy thoughts or thy heart's workings be,
Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell.
How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show !

XCIV.

They that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow ;
They rightly do inherit Heaven's graces,
And husband nature's riches from expense ;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die ;

But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity :
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds ;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

XCV.

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame,
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name !
O, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose !
That tongue that tells the story of thy days,
Making lascivious comments on thy sport,
Cannot dispraise but in a kind of praise ;
Naming thy name blesses an ill report.
O, what a mansion have those vices got
Which for their habitation chose out thee !
Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot,
And all things turn to fair, that eyes can see !
Take heed, dear heart, of this large privilege ;
The hardest knife ill-used doth lose his edge.

XCVI.

Some say, thy fault is youth, some wantonness ;
Some say, thy grace is youth and gentle sport ;
Both grace and faults are lov'd of more and less :
Thou mak'st faults graces that to thee resort.
As on the finger of a throned queen
The basest jewel will be well esteem'd ;
So are those errors that in thee are seen
To truths translated, and for true things deem'd.
How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
If like a lamb he could his looks translate !
How many gazers mightst thou lead away,
If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state !
But do not so ; I love thee in such sort,
As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

XCVII.

How like a winter hath my absence been
 From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
 What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
 What old December's bareness everywhere!
 And yet this time remov'd^a was summer's time;
 The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
 Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
 Like widow'd wombs after their lords' decease:
 Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
 But hope of orphans, and unfather'd fruit;
 For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
 And, thou away, the very birds are mute;
 Or, if they sing, 't is with so dull a cheer,
 That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

XCVIII.

From you have I been absent in the spring,
 When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
 Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
 That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
 Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
 Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
 Could make me any summer's story tell,
 Or from their proud lap pluck them where they
 grew:
 Nor did I wonder at the lilies white,
 Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
 They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
 Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
 Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
 As with your shadow I with these did play:

^a Malone explains this as, "This time in which I was remote or absent from thee."

XCIX.

The forward violet thus did I chide ;—
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath ? The purple pride
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells,
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dy'd.
The lily I condemned for thy hand,
And buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair :
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair ;
A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both,
And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath ;
But for his theft, in pride of all his growth
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,
But sweet or colour it had stolen from thee.

C.

Where art thou, Muse, that thou forgett'st so long
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might ?
Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,
Darkening thy power, to lend base subjects light ?
Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem
In gentle numbers time so idly spent ;
Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem
And gives thy pen both skill and argument.
Rise, restive Muse, my love's sweet face survey,
If Time have any wrinkle graven there ;
If any, be a satire to decay,
And make Time's spoils despised everywhere.
Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life ;
So thou prevent'st his scythe and crooked knife.

CI.

O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dy'd ?

Both truth and beauty on my love depends ;
 So dost thou too, and therein dignified.
 Make answer, Muse : wilt thou not haply say,
 " Truth needs no colour with his colour fix'd,
 Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay ;
 But best is best, if never intermix'd ?"—
 Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb ?
 Excuse not silence so ; for it lies in thee
 To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,
 And to be prais'd of ages yet to be.
 Then do thy office, Muse ; I teach thee how
 To make him seem long hence as he shows now.

CII.

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming ;
 I love not less, though less the show appear ;
 That love is merchandiz'd, whose rich esteeming
 The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
 Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
 When I was wont to greet it with my lays ;
 As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
 And stops his pipe in growth of riper days :
 Not that the summer is less pleasant now
 Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
 But that wild music burthens every bough,
 And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
 Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,
 Because I would not dull you with my song.

CIII.

Alack ! what poverty my muse brings forth,
 That having such a scope to show her pride,
 The argument, all bare, is of more worth,
 Than when it hath my added praise beside.
 O blame me not if I no more can write !
 Look in your glass, and there appears a face

That over-goes my blunt invention quite,
Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace.
Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,
To mar the subject that before was well ?
For to no other pass my verses tend,
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell ;
And more, much more, than in my verse can sit,
Your own glass shows you, when you look in it.

CIV.

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I ey'd,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters' cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride ;
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd
In process of the seasons have I seen ;
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah ! yet doth beauty, like a dial hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceiv'd ;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv'd.
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred,
Ere you were born, was beauty's summer dead.

CV.

Let not my love be call'd idolatry,
Nor my beloved as an idol show,
Since all alike my songs and praises be,
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,
Still constant in a wondrous excellence ;
Therefore my verse, to constancy confin'd,
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
Fair, kind, and true, is all my argument,
Fair, kind, and true, varying to other words ;

And in this change is my invention spent,
 Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.
 Fair, kind, and true, have often liv'd alone,
 Which three, till now, never kept seat in one.

CVI.

When in the chronicle of wasted time
 I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
 And beauty making beautiful old rhyme,
 In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
 Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
 Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
 I see their antique pen would have express'd
 Even such a beauty as you master now.
 So all their praises are but prophecies
 Of this our time, all you prefiguring ;
 And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
 They had not skill enough your worth to sing :
 For we, which now behold these present days,
 Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

CVII.

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
 Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,
 Can yet the lease of my true love control,
 Suppos'd as forfeit to a confin'd doom.
 The mortal moon hath her eclipse endur'd,
 And the sad augurs mock their own presage ;
 Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd,
 And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
 Now with the drops of this most balmy time
 My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,*
 Since spite of him I 'll live in this poor rhyme,
 While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.

* *Subscribes*—submits—acknowledges as a superior.

And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

CVIII.

What 's in the brain that ink may character,
Which hath not figur'd to thee my true spirit ?
What 's new to speak, what now to register,
That may express my love, or thy dear merit ?
Nothing, sweet boy ; but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same ;
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallow'd thy fair name.
So that eternal love in love's fresh case
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquity for aye his page ;
Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
Where time and outward form would show it
dead.

CIX.

O, never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify !
As easy might I from myself depart,
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie :
That is my home of love : if I have rang'd,
Like him that travels, I return again ;
Just to the time, not with the time exchang'd,—
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reign'd
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good ;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose ; in it thou art my all.

CX.

Alas, 't is true, I have gone here and there,
 And made myself a motley^a to the view,
 Gor'd^b mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most
 dear,
 Made old offences of affections new.
 Most true it is, that I have look'd on truth
 Askance and strangely; but, by all above,
 These blenches^c gave my heart another youth,
 And worse essays prov'd thee my best of love.
 Now all is done, have^d what shall have no end:
 Mine appetite I never more will grind
 On newer proof, to try an older friend,
 A God in love, to whom I am confin'd.
 Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
 Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

CXI.

O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
 The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
 That did not better for my life provide,
 Than public means, which public manners breeds.
 Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
 And almost thence my nature is subdued
 To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
 Pity me then, and wish I were renew'd;

^a Motley was the dress of the domestic fool, or jester; and thus the buffoon himself came to be called a *motley*.

^b *Gor'd*—wounded.

^c *Blenches*—deviations.

^d *Have*. This is the word of the old copy. The reading of all modern editions is—

“Now all is done, *save* what shall have no end.”

“Now all is done” clearly applies to the *blenches*, the *worse essays*; but the poet then adds, “*have* thou what shall have no end,”—my constant affection, my undivided friendship.

Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
 Potions of eysell,^a 'gainst my strong infection
 No bitterness that I will bitter think,
 Nor double penance, to correct correction.

Pity me then, dear friend, and I assure ye,
 Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

CXII.

Your love and pity doth the impression fill
 Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow ;
 For what care I who calls me well or ill,
 So you o'ergreen my bad, my good allow ?^b
 You are my all-the-world, and I must strive
 To know my shames and praises from your tongue ;
 None else to me, nor I to none alive,
 That my steel'd sense or changes, right or wrong.
 In so profound abysm I throw all care
 Of other's voices, that my adder's sense
 To critic and to flatterer stopped are.
 Mark how with my neglect I do dispense :—
 You are so strongly in my purpose bred,
 That all the world besides methinks are dead.

CXIII.

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind ;
 And that which governs me to go about
 Doth part his function, and is partly blind,
 Seems seeing, but effectually is out ;
 For it no form delivers to the heart
 Of bird, of flower, or shape, which it doth latch ;^c
 Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
 Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch ;
 For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
 The most sweet favour,^d or deformed'st creature,

^a *Eysell*—vinegar.^c *Latch* signifies to lay hold of.^b *Allow*—approve.^d *Favour*—countenance.

The mountain or the sea, the day or night,
 The crow, or dove, it shapes them to your feature.
 Incapable of more, replete with you,
 My most true mind thus maketh mine untrue.*

CXIV.

Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,
 Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery,
 Or whether shall I say mine eye saith true,
 And that your love taught it this alchymy,
 To make of monsters and things indigest
 Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,
 Creating every bad a perfect best,
 As fast as objects to his beams assemble?
 O, 't is the first; 't is flattery in my seeing,
 And my great mind most kingly drinks it up:
 Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,
 And to his palate doth prepare the cup:
 If it be poison'd, 't is the lesser sin
 That mine eye loves it, and doth first begin.

CXV.

Those lines that I before have writ, do lie;
 Even those that said I could not love you dearer;
 Yet then my judgment knew no reason why
 My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
 But reckoning time, whose million'd accidents
 Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,
 Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
 Divert strong minds to the course of altering things;
 Alas! why, fearing of Time's tyranny,
 Might I not then say, "Now I love you best,"
 When I was certain o'er uncertainty,
 Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?
 Love is a babe; then might I not say so,
 To give full growth to that which still doth grow?

* *Untrue* is here used as a substantive.

CXVI.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds,
 Or bends with the remover to remove :
 O no ; it is an ever-fixed mark,
 That looks on tempests, and is never shaken ;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth 's unknown, although his height be taken.
 Love 's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come ;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
 If this be error, and upon me prov'd,
 I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

CXVII.

Accuse me thus ; that I have scanted all
 Wherein I should your great deserts repay ;
 Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
 Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day ;
 That I have frequent been with unknown minds,
 And given to time your own dear-purchas'd right ;
 That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
 Which should transport me farthest from your sight.
 Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
 And on just proof surmise accumulate,
 Bring me within the level of your frown,
 But shoot not at me in your waken'd hate :
 Since my appeal says, I did strive to prove
 The constancy and virtue of your love.

CXVIII.

Like as, to make our appetites more keen,
 With eager^a compounds we our palate urge ;

^a *Eager*—sour ; the French *aigre*.

As, to prevent our maladies unseen,
 We sicken to shun sickness, when we purge ;
 Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,
 To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding,
 And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
 To be diseas'd, ere that there was true needing.
 Thus policy in love, to anticipate
 The ills that were not, grew to faults assured,
 And brought to medicine a healthful state,
 Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cured.
 But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
 Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

CXIX.

What potions have I drunk of Syren tears,
 Distill'd from limbecs foul as hell within,
 Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,
 Still losing when I saw myself to win !
 What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
 Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never !
 How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,
 In the distraction of this madding fever !
 O benefit of ill ! now I find true
 That better is by evil still made better ;
 And ruin'd love, when it is built anew,
 Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
 So I return rebuk'd to my content,
 And gain by ill thrice more than I have spent.

CXX.

That you were once unkind, befriends me now,
 And for that sorrow, which I then did feel,
 Needs must I under my transgression bow,
 Unless my nerves were brass or hammer'd steel.
 For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
 As I by yours, you have pass'd a hell of time ;

Fitted—subjected to fits.

And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
 To weigh how once I suffer'd in your crime.
 O that our night of woe might have remember'd^a
 My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits,
 And soon to you, as you to me, then tender'd
 The humble salve which wounded bosoms fits !

But that your trespass now becomes a fee ;
 Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

CXXI.

'T is better to be vile than vile esteem'd,
 When not to be receives reproach of being,
 And the just pleasure lost, which is so deem'd
 Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing.
 For why should others' false adulterate eyes
 Give salutation to my sportive blood ?
 Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
 Which in their wills count bad what I think good ?
 No.—I am that I am ; and they that level
 At my abuses, reckon up their own :
 I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel ;^b
 By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown ;
 Unless this general evil they maintain,—
 All men are bad, and in their badness reign.

CXXII.

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
 Full character'd with lasting memory,
 Which shall above that idle rank remain,
 Beyond all date, even to eternity :
 Or at the least so long as brain and heart
 Have faculty by nature to subsist ;
 Till each to raz'd oblivion yield his part
 Of thee, thy record never can be miss'd.

^a *Remember'd*—reminded.
 SUP. VOL.

^b *Bevel*—bent in an angle.
 M

That poor retention could not so much hold,^a
 Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score ;
 Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
 To trust those tables that receive thee more :
 To keep an adjunct to remember thee,
 Were to import forgetfulness in me.

CXXIII.

No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change :
 Thy pyramids built up with newer might
 To me are nothing novel, nothing strange ;
 They are but dressings of a former sight.
 Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
 What thou dost foist upon us that is old ;
 And rather make them born to our desire,
 Than think that we before have heard them told.
 Thy registers and thee I both defy,
 Not wondering at the present nor the past ;
 For thy records and what we see do lie,
 Made more or less by thy continual haste :
 This I do vow, and this shall ever be,
 I will be true, despite thy scythe and thee ;

CXXIV.

If my dear love were but the child of state,
 It might for Fortune's bastard be unfather'd,
 As subject to Time's love, or to Time's hate,
 Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd.
 No, it was builded far from accident ;
 It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
 Under the blow of thrall'd discontent,
 Whereto the inviting time our fashion calls ;

^a Malone says, "*That poor retention* is the table-book given to him by his friend, incapable of retaining, or rather of containing, so much as the tablet of the brain."

It fears not policy, that heretic,
 Which works on leases of short-number'd hours,
 But all alone stands hugely politic,
 That it nor grows with heat, nor drowns with showers.
 To this I witness call the fools of time,
 Which die for goodness, who have liv'd for crime.

CXXV.

Were it aught to me I bore the canopy,
 With my extern the outward honouring,
 Or laid great bases for eternity,
 Which prove more short than waste or ruining ?
 Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour
 Lose all, and more, by paying too much rent,
 For compound sweet foregoing simple savour,
 Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent ?
 No ;—let me be obsequious in thy heart,
 And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
 Which is not mix'd with seconds,* knows no art,
 But mutual render, only me for thee.
 Hence, thou suborn'd informer ! a true soul,
 When most impeach'd, stands least in thy control.

CXXVI.

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
 Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle, hour ;
 Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
 Thy lovers withering, as thy sweet self grow'st !
 If Nature, sovereign mistress over wrack,
 As thou goest onwards, still will pluck thee back,
 She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
 May time disgrace, and wretched minutes kill.
 Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure ;
 She may detain, but not still keep her treasure :

* *Seconds*. The poet's friend has his chief oblation ; no seconds, or inferior persons, are mixed up with his tribute of affection.

Her audit, though delay'd, answer'd must be,
And her quietus is to render thee.

CXXVII.

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame:
For since each hand hath put on nature's power,
Fairing the foul with art's false borrow'd face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy hour,
But is profan'd, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,
Her eyes so suited; and they mourners seem
At such, who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
Slandering creation with a false esteem:

Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe,
That every tongue says, beauty should look so.

CXXVIII.

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st,
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks,* that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more bless'd than living lips.

Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

* *Jacks*—the small hammers, moved by the keys, which strike the strings of a virginal.

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
 Is lust in action; and till action, lust
 Is perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
 Enjoy'd no sooner, but despised straight;
 Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
 Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait,
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
 Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
 Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
 A bliss in proof,—and prov'd, a very woe;
 Before, a joy propos'd; behind, a dream:
 All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

CXXX.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
 I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
 And in some perfumes is there more delight
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
 I love to hear her speak,—yet well I know
 That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
 I grant I never saw a goddess go,—
 My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground
 And yet, by Heaven, I think my love as rare
 As any she belied with false compare.

CXXXI.

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
 As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;

For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart
 Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
 Yet, in good faith, some say that thee behold,
 Thy face hath not the power to make love groan:
 To say they err, I dare not be so bold,
 Although I swear it to myself alone.
 And, to be sure that is not false I swear,
 A thousand groans, but thinking on thy face,
 One on another's neck, do witness bear
 Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place.
 In nothing art thou black, save in thy deeds,
 And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.

CXXXII.

Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
 Knowing thy heart, torment me with disdain;
 Have put on black, and loving mourners be,
 Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
 And truly not the morning sun of heaven
 Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,
 Nor that full star that ushers in the even
 Doth half that glory to the sober west,
 As those two mourning eyes become thy face:
 O, let it then as well beseem thy heart
 To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
 And suit thy pity like in every part.
 Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
 And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

CXXXIII.

Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan
 For that deep wound it gives my friend and me!
 Is 't not enough to torture me alone,
 But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?
 Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken,
 And my next self thou harder hast engross'd;

Of him, myself, and thee, I am forsaken ;
 A torment thrice three-fold thus to be cross'd.
 Prison my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,
 But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail ;
 Who e'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard ;
 Thou canst not then use rigour in my gaol :
 And yet thou wilt ; for I, being pent in thee,
 Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.

CXXXIV.

So now I have confess'd that he is thine,
 And I myself am mortgag'd to thy will ;
 Myself I 'll forfeit, so that other mine
 Thou wilt restore, to be my comfort still :
 But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
 For thou art covetous, and he is kind !
 He learn'd but, surety-like, to write for me,
 Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
 The statute^a of thy beauty thou wilt take,
 Thou usurer, that putt'st forth all to use,
 And sue a friend, came debtor for my sake ;
 So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
 Him have I lost ; thou hast both him and me ;
 He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.

CXXXV.

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy will,
 And wilt to boot, and wilt in over-plus ;
 More than enough am I that vex thee still,
 To thy sweet will making addition thus.
 Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
 Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine ?
 Shall will in others seem right gracious,
 And in my will no fair acceptance shine ?

^a Statute—security, or obligation.

The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
 And in abundance addeth to his store;
 So thou, being rich in will, add to thy will
 One will of mine, to make thy large will more.
 Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill;
 Think all but one, and me in that one *Will*.

CXXXVI.

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
 Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy *Will*,
 And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there;
 Thus far for love, my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.
Will will fulfil the treasure of thy love,
 Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one,
 In things of great receipt with ease we prove;
 Among a number one is reckon'd none.
 Then in the number let me pass untold,
 Though in thy stores' account I one must be;
 For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
 That nothing me, a something sweet to thee:
 Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
 And then thou lov'st me,—for my name is *Will*.

CXXXVII.

Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,
 That they behold, and see not what they see?
 They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
 Yet what the best is, take the worst to be.
 If eyes, corrupt by over-partial looks,
 Be anchor'd in the bay where all men ride,
 Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,
 Whereto the judgment of my heart is tied?
 Why should my heart think that a several plot,
 Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?
 Or mine eyes, seeing this, say this is not,
 To put fair truth upon so foul a face?

In things right true my heart and eyes have err'd,
And to this false plague are they now transferr'd.

CXXXVIII.

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies ;
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unlearned in the world's false subtilties.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue ;
On both sides thus is simple truth suppress.
But wherefore says she not she is unjust ?
And wherefore say not I that I am old ?
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
And age in love loves not to have years told :
Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

CXXXIX.

O, call not me to justify the wrong
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart ;
Wound me not with thine eye, but with thy tongue ;
Use power with power, and slay me not by art.
Tell me thou lov'st elsewhere ; but in my sight,
Dear heart, forbear to glance thine eye aside.
What need'st thou wound with cunning, when thy might
Is more than my o'erpress'd defence can 'bide ?
Let me excuse thee : ah ! my love well knows
Her pretty looks have been mine enemies ;
And therefore from my face she turns my foes,
That they elsewhere might dart their injuries :
Yet do not so ; but since I am near slain,
Kill me outright with looks, and rid my pain.

CXL.

Be wise as thou art cruel ; do not press
My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain ;

Lest sorrow lend me words, and words express
 The manner of my pity-wanting pain.
 If I might teach thee wit, better it were,
 Though not to love, yet, love, to tell me so ;
 (As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,
 No news but health from their physicians know ;)
 For, if I should despair, I should grow mad,
 And in my madness might speak ill of thee :
 Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,
 Mad slanderers by mad ears believed be.
 That I may not be so, nor thou belied,
 Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go
 wide.

CXLI.

In faith I do not love thee with mine eyes,
 For they in thee a thousand errors note ;
 But 't is my heart that loves what they despise,
 Who in despite of view is pleas'd to dote.
 Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted ;
 Nor tender feeling, to base touches prone,
 Nor taste nor smell, desire to be invited
 To any sensual feast with thee alone :
 But my five wits, nor my five senses can
 Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,
 Who leaves unsway'd the likeness of a man,
 Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be :
 Only my plague thus far I count my gain,
 That she that makes me sin, awards me pain.

CXLII.

Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,
 Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving :
 O, but with mine compare thou thine own state,
 And thou shalt find it merits not reproving ;
 Or, if it do, not from those lips of thine,
 That have profan'd their scarlet ornaments,
 And seal'd false bonds of love as oft as mine .
 Robb'd others' beds' revenues of their rents.

Be it lawful I love thee, as thou lov'st those
Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee :
Root pity in thy heart, that, when it grows,
Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.

If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,
By self-example mayst thou be denied !

CXLIII.

Lo, as a careful housewife runs to catch
One of her feather'd creatures broke away,
Sets down her babe, and makes all swift despatch
In pursuit of the thing she would have stay ;
Whilst her neglected child holds her in chace,
Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
To follow that which flies before her face,
Not prizing her poor infant's discontent ;
So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I thy babe chase thee afar behind ;
But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind :
So will I pray that thou mayst have thy *Will*,
If thou turn back, and my loud crying still.

CXLIV.

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest^a me still ;
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman, colour'd ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend,
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell ;
But being both from me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell.

^a *Suggest*—tempt.

Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

CXLV.

Those lips that Love's own hand did make
Breath'd forth the sound that said, "I hate,"
To me that languish'd for her sake :
But when she saw my woeful state,
Straight in her heart did mercy come,
Chiding that tongue, that ever sweet
Was used in giving gentle doom ;
And taught it thus anew to greet :
"I hate," she alter'd with an end,
That follow'd it as gentle day
Doth follow night, who like a fiend
From heaven to hell is flown away.
"I hate" from hate away she threw,
And sav'd my life, saying—"not you."

CXLVI.

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Fool'd by those rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within, and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay ?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend ?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge ? Is this thy body's end ?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store ;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross ;
Within be fed, without be rich no more :
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And, Death once dead, there 's no more dying then.

CXLVII.

My love is as a fever, longing still
For that which longer nurseth the disease ;

Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
 The uncertain sickly appetite to please.
 My reason, the physician to my love,
 Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
 Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
 Desire is death, which physic did except.
 Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
 And frantic mad with evermore unrest;
 My thoughts and my discourse as mad men's are,
 At random from the truth vainly express'd;
 For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
 Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

CXLVIII.

O me! what eyes hath love put in my head,
 Which have no correspondence with true sight!
 Or, if they have, where is my judgment fled,
 That censures^a falsely what they see aright?
 If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote,
 What means the world to say it is not so?
 If it be not, then love doth well denote
 Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no,
 How can it? O how can Love's eye be true,
 That is so vex'd with watching and with tears?
 No marvel then though I mistake my view;
 The sun itself sees not, till heaven clears.
 O cunning Love! with tears thou keep'st me blind,
 Lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find.

CXLIX.

Canst thou, O cruel! say I love thee not,
 When I, against myself, with thee partake?^b
 Do I not think on thee, when I forgot
 Am of myself, all tyrant, for thy sake?

^a *Censures*—judges, estimates.

^b *Partake*—take part. A partaker was a confederate.

Who hateth thee that I do call my friend ?
 On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon ?
 Nay if thou low'r'st on me, do I not spend
 Revenge upon myself with present moan ?
 What merit do I in myself respect,
 That is so proud thy service to despise,
 When all my best doth worship thy defect,
 Commanded by the motion of thine eyes ?
 But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind ;
 Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.

CL.

O, from what power hast thou this powerful might,
 With insufficiency my heart to sway ?
 To make me give the lie to my true sight,
 And swear that brightness doth not grace the day ?
 Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,
 That in the very refuse of thy deeds
 There is such strength and warrantise of skill,
 That, in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds ?
 Who taught thee how to make me love thee more,
 The more I hear and see just cause of hate ?
 O, though I love what others do abhor,
 With others thou shouldst not abhor my state ;
 If thy unworthiness rais'd love in me,
 More worthy I to be belov'd of thee.

CLI.

Love is too young to know what conscience is ;
 Yet who knows not, conscience is born of love ?
 Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,^a
 Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove.
 For thou betraying me, I do betray
 My nobler part to my gross body's treason ;

^a Amis—fault.

My soul doth tell my body that he may
 Triumph in love ; flesh stays no farther reason ;
 But, rising at thy name, doth point out thee
 As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride,
 He is contented thy poor drudge to be,
 To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.

No want of conscience hold it that I call
 Her—love, for whose dear love I rise and fall.

CLII.

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
 But thou art twice forsworn, to me love swearing ;
 In act thy bed-vow broke, and new faith torn,
 In vowing new hate after new love bearing.
 But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,
 When I break twenty ? I am perjur'd most ;
 For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,
 And all my honest faith in thee is lost :
 For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
 Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy ;
 And, to enlighten thee, gave eyes to blindness,
 Or made them swear against the thing they see ;
 For I have sworn thee fair : more perjur'd I,
 To swear, against the truth, so foul a lie !

CLIII.

Cupid laid by his brand, and fell asleep :
 A maid of Dian's this advantage found,
 And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep
 In a cold valley-fountain of that ground ;
 Which borrow'd from this holy fire of love
 A dateless lively heat, still to endure,
 And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove
 Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.
 But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fir'd,
 The boy for trial needs would touch my breast ;

I, sick withal, the help of bath desir'd,
And thither hied, a sad distemper'd guest,
But found no cure : the bath for my help lies
Where Cupid got new fire,—my mistress' eyes.

The little love-god, lying once asleep,
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep
Came tripping by ; but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire
Which many legions of true hearts had warm'd ;
And so the general of hot desire
Was sleeping by a virgin hand disarm'd.
This brand she quenched in a cool well by,
Which from Love's fire took heat perpetual,
Growing a bath and healthful remedy
For men diseas'd ; but I, my mistress' thrall,
Came there for cure, and this by that I prove,
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

End of the Sonnets.





A LOVER'S COMPLAINT.

From off a hill whose concave womb re-worded ^a
A plaintful story from a sisting vale,
My spirits to attend this double voice accorded,
And down I laid^b to list the sad-tun'd tale :
Ere long espied a fickle maid full pale,
Tearing of papers, breaking rings a-twain,
Storming her world with sorrow's wind and rain.

Upon her head a platted hive of straw,
Which fortified her visage from the sun,
Whereon the thought might think sometime it saw
The carcase of a beauty spent and done.
Time had not scythed all that youth begun,
Nor youth all quit : but, spite of Heaven's fell rage,
Some beauty peep'd through lattice of sear'd age.

Oft did she heave her napkin^c to her eyne,
Which on it had conceited characters,^d
Laund'ring^e the silken figures in the brine
That season'd woe had pelleted^f in tears,
And often reading what contents it bears ;
As often shrieking undistinguish'd woe,
In clamours of all size, both high and low.

^a *Re-worded*—echoed.

^b *Laid*. So the original. But it is usually more correctly printed *lay*. The idiomatic grammar of Shakspeare's age ought not to be removed.

^c *Napkin*—handkerchief.

^d *Conceited characters*—fanciful figures worked on the handkerchief.

^e *Laund'ring*—washing.

^f *Pelleted*—formed into pellets, or small balls.

Sometimes her levell'd eyes their carriage ride,
 As they did battery to the spheres intend;
 Sometime diverted their poor balls are tied
 To th' orb'd earth: sometimes they do extend
 Their view right on; anon their gazes lend
 To every place at once, and nowhere fix'd,
 The mind and sight distractedly commix'd.

Her hair, nor loose, nor tied in formal plat,
 Proclaim'd in her a careless hand of pride;
 For some, untuck'd, descended her sheav'd^a hat,
 Hanging her pale and pined cheek beside;
 Some in her threaten fillet still did bide,
 And, true to bondage, would not break from thence,
 Though slackly braided in loose negligence.

A thousand favours from a maund^b she drew
 Of amber, crystal, and of bedded jet,^c
 Which one by one she in a river threw,
 Upon whose weeping margent she was set;
 Like usury, applying wet to wet,
 Or monarch's hands, that let not bounty fall
 Where want cries "some," but where excess begs all.

Of folded schedules had she many a one,
 Which she perus'd, sigh'd, tore, and gave the flood;
 Crack'd many a ring of posied gold and bone,
 Bidding them find their sepulchres in mud;
 Found yet mo^d letters sadly penn'd in blood,
 With sleided silk^e feat and affectedly
 Enswarth'd, and seal'd to curious secresy.

^a *Sheav'd*—made of straw, collected from sheaves.

^b *Maund*—a basket.

^c *Bedded*. So the original, the word probably meaning *jet imbedded*, or set, in some other substance.

^d *Mo*—more.

^e *Sleided silk*. In Mr. Ramsay's Introduction to his edition of the Paston Letters, the old mode of sealing a letter is clearly described:—"It was carefully folded, and fastened at the end

These often bath'd she in her fluxive eyes,
 And often kiss'd, and often gave ^a to tear;
 Cried, "O false blood! thou register of lies,
 What unapproved witness dost thou bear!
 Ink would have seem'd more black and damned
 here!"

This said, in top of rage the lines she rents,
 Big discontent so breaking their contents.

A reverend man that graz'd his cattle nigh,
 Sometime a blusterer, that the ruffle knew
 Of court, of city, and had let go by
 The swiftest hours, observed as they flew,
 Towards this afflicted fancy ^b fastly drew;
 And privileg'd by age, desires to know
 In brief the grounds and motives of her woe.

So slides he down upon his grained bat,^c
 And comely-distant sits he by her side;
 When he again desires her, being sat,
 Her grievance with his hearing to divide:
 If that from him there may be aught applied
 Which may her suffering ecstasy assuage,
 'T is promis'd in the charity of age.

"Father," she says, "though in me you behold
 The injury of many a blasting hour,
 Let it not tell your judgment I am old;
 Not age, but sorrow, over me hath power:
 I might as yet have been a spreading flower,

by a sort of paper strap, upon which the seal was affixed; and under the seal a string, a silk thread, or even a straw, was frequently placed running around the letter."

^a *Gave* is here used in the sense of gave the mind to, contemplated, made a movement towards, inclined to.

^b *Fancy* is often used by Shakspeare in the sense of *love*; but here it means one that is possessed by fancy.

^c *Bat*—club.

Fresh to myself, if I had self-applied
Love to myself, and to no love beside.

" But woe is me ! too early I attended
A youthful suit (it was to gain my grace)
Of one by nature's outwards so commended,
That maiden's eyes stuck over all his face :
Love lack'd a dwelling, and made him her place :
And when in his fair parts she did abide,
She was new lodg'd, and newly deified.

" His browny locks did hang in crooked curls ;
And every light occasion of the wind
Upon his lips their silken parcels hurls.
What 's sweet to do, to do will aptly find :
Each eye that saw him did enchant the mind ;
For on his visage was in little drawn,
What largeness thinks in paradise was *sawn*.^a

" Small show of man was yet upon his chin ;
His phoenix down began but to appear,
Like unshorn velvet, on that termless skin,
Whose bare out-bragg'd the web it seem'd to wear ;
Yet show'd his visage^b by that cost more dear ;
And nice affections wavering stood in doubt
If best 't were as it was, or best without.

" His qualities were beauteous as his form,
For maiden-tongued he was, and thereof free ;
Yet, if men mov'd him, was he such a storm
As oft 'twixt May and April is to see,
When winds breathe sweet, unruly though they be.
His rudeness so with his authoriz'd youth
Did livery falseness in a pride of truth.

^a *Sawn*. Boswell says that the word means *sown*, and that it is still so pronounced in Scotland.

^b *Visage* is the inverted nominative case to *showed*.

" Well could he ride, and often men would say
That horse his mettle from his rider takes :
Proud of subjection, noble by the sway,
What rounds, what bounds, what course, what stop he
makes !

And controversy hence a question takes,
Whether the horse by him became his deed,
Or he his manage by the well-doing steed.

" But quickly on this side the verdict went ;
His real habitude gave life and grace
To appertainings and to ornament,
Accomplish'd in himself, not in his case :^a
All aids, themselves made fairer by their place,
Can^b for additions ; yet their purpos'd trim
Piec'd not his grace, but were all grac'd by him.

" So on the tip of his subduing tongue
All kind of arguments and question deep,
All replication prompt, and reason strong,
For his advantage still did wake and sleep :
To make the weeper laugh, the laughter weep,
He had the dialect and different skill,
Catching all passions in his craft of will ;

" That he did in the general bosom reign
Of young, of old ; and sexes both enchanted,
To dwell with him in thoughts, or to remain
In personal duty, following where he haunted :
Consents bewitch'd, ere he desire, have granted,
And dialogued for him what he would say,
Ask'd their own wills, and made their wills obey.

^a *Case*—outward show.

^b *Can* is constantly used by the old writers, especially by Spenser, in the sense of *began*. *For* is used in the sense of *as*.

" Many there were that did his picture get,
To serve their eyes, and in it put their mind ;
Like fools that in the imagination set
The goodly objects which abroad they find
Of lands and mansions, theirs in thought assign'd ;
And labouring in mo pleasures to bestow them,
Than the true gouty landlord which doth owe them :

" So many have, that never touch'd his hand,
Sweetly suppos'd them mistress of his heart.
My woeful self, that did in freedom stand,
And was my own fee-simple, (not in part,)
What with his art in youth, and youth in art,
Threw my affections in his charmed power,
Reserv'd the stalk, and gave him all my flower.

" Yet did I not, as some my equals did,
Demand of him, nor being desired yielded ;
Finding myself in honour so forbid,
With safest distance I mine honour shielded :
Experience for me many bulwarks builded
Of proofs new-bleeding, which remain'd the foil
Of this false jewel, and his amorous spoil.

" But ah ! who ever shunn'd by precedent
The destin'd ill she must herself assay ?
Or forc'd examples, 'gainst her own content,
To put the by-pass'd perils in her way ?
Counsel may stop a while what will not stay ;
For when we rage, advice is often seen
By blunting us to make our wits more keen.

" Nor gives it satisfaction to our blood,
That we must curb it upon others' proof,
To be forbid the sweets that seem so good,
For fear of harms that preach in our behoof.
O appetite, from judgment stand aloof !

The one a palate hath that needs will taste,
Though reason weep, and cry It is thy last.

" For further I could say, This man 's untrue,
And knew the patterns of his foul beguiling ;
Heard where his plants in others' orchards grew,
Saw how deceits were gilded in his smiling ;
Knew vows were ever brokers to defiling ;
Thought^a characters and words, merely but art,
And bastards of his foul adulterate heart.

" And long upon these terms I held my city,
Till thus he 'gan besiege me : Gentle maid,
Have of my suffering youth some feeling pity,
And be not of my holy vows afraid :
That 's to you sworn, to none was ever said ;
For feasts of love I have been call'd unto,
Till now did ne'er invite, nor never vow.

" All my offences that abroad you see
Are errors of the blood, none of the mind ;
Love made them not ; with acture^b they may be,
Where neither party is nor true nor kind :
They sought their shame that so their shame did find ;
And so much less of shame in me remains,
By how much of me their reproach contains.

" Among the many that mine eyes have seen,
Not one whose flame my heart so much as warm'd,
Or my affliction put to the smallest teen,^c
Or any of my leisures ever charm'd :
Harm have I done to them, but ne'er was harm'd ,

^a Malone—and he is followed in all modern editions—puts a comma after *thought*, and says, " it is here, I believe, a substantive." Surely *thought* is a verb. We have a regular sequence of verbs—heard—saw—knew—thought.

^b *Acture* is explained as synonymous with *action*.

^c *Teen*—grief.

Kept hearts in liveries, but mine own was free,
And reigu'd, commanding in his monarchy.

" Look here what tributes wounded fancies sent me,
Of paled pearls, and rubies red as blood ;
Figuring that they their passions likewise lent me
Of grief and blushes, aptly understood
In bloodless white and the encrimson'd mood ;
Effects of terror and dear modesty,
Encamp'd in hearts, but fighting outwardly.

" And lo ! behold these talents^a of their hair,
With twisted metal amorously impleach'd,^b
I have receiv'd from many a several fair,
(Their kind acceptance weepingly beseech'd,)
With the annexions of fair gems enrich'd,
And deep-brain'd sonnets that did amplify
Each stone's dear nature, worth, and quality.

" The diamond, why 't was beautiful and hard,
Whereto his invis'd^c properties did tend ;
The deep-green emerald, in whose fresh regard
Weak sights their sickly radiance do amend ;
The heaven-hued sapphire and the opal blend
With objects manifold ; each several stone,
With wit well blazon'd, smil'd or made some moan.

" Lo ! all these trophies of affections hot,
Of pensiv'd and subdued desires the tender,
Nature hath charg'd me that I heard them not,
But yield them up where I myself must render,
That is, to you, my origin and ender :
For these, of force, must your oblations be,
Since I their altar, you eupatron me.

^a *Talents* is here used in the sense of something precious.

^b *Impleach'd*—interwoven.

^c *Invis'd*—invisible.

" O then advance of yours that phraseless hand,
 Whose white weighs down the airy scale of praise ;
 Take all these similes to your own command,
 Hallow'd with sighs that burning lungs did raise ;
 What me your minister, for you obeys,
 Works under you ; and to your audit comes
 Their distract parcels in combined sums.

" Lo ! this device was sent me from a nun,
 Or sister sanctified of holiest note ;
 Which late her noble suit ^a in court did shun,
 Whose rarest havings ^b made the blossoms ^c dote ;
 For she was sought by spirits of richest coat,^d
 But kept cold distance, and did thence remove,
 To spend her living in eternal love.

" But O, my sweet, what labour is 't to leave
 The thing we have not, mastering what not strives ?
 Paling the place which did no form receive,
 Playing patient sports in unconstrained gyves :
 She that her fame so to herself contrives,
 The scars of battle 'scapeth by the flight,
 And makes her absence valiant, not her might.

" O pardon me, in that my boast is true ;
 The accident which brought me to her eye,
 Upon the moment did her force subdue,
 And now she would the caged cloister fly :
 Religious love put out religion's eye :
 Not to be tempted, would she be immur'd,
 And now, to tempt all, liberty procur'd.

^a *Suit*. " The noble suit in court " is, we think, the suit made to her in court.

^b *Havings*. Malone receives this as *accomplishments*—Mr. Dyce as *fortune*.

^c *Blossoms*—young men ; the flower of the nobility.

^d *Of richest coat*—of highest descent.

"How mighty then you are, O hear me tell!
The broken bosoms that to me belong
Have emptied all their fountains in my well,
And mine I pour your ocean all among:
I strong o'er them, and you o'er me being strong,
Must for your victory us all congest,
As compound love to physic your cold breast.

"My parts had power to charm a sacred sun,
Who, disciplin'd and dieted in grace,
Believ'd her eyes when they to assail begun,
All vows and consecrations giving place.
O most potential love! vow, bond, nor space,
In thee hath neither sting, knot, nor confine,
For thou art all, and all things else are thine.

"When thou impresses, what are precepts worth
Of stale example? When thou wilt inflame,
How coldly those impediments stand forth
Of wealth, of filial fear, law, kindred, fame!
Love's arms are peace, 'gainst rule, 'gainst sense, 'gainst
 shame,
And sweetens, in the suffering pangs it bears,
The aloes of all forces, shocks, and fears.

"Now all these hearts that do on mine depend,
Feeling it break, with bleeding groans they pine,
And supplicant their sighs to you extend,
To leave the battery that you make 'gainst mine,
Lending soft audience to my sweet design,
And credent soul to that strong-bonded oath,
That shall prefer and undertake my troth.

"This said, his watery eyes he did dismount,
Whose sights till then were levell'd on my face;
Each cheek a river running from a fount
With brinish current downward flow'd apace:
O how the channel to the stream gave grace!

Who, glaz'd with crystal, gate^a the glowing roses
That flame through water which their hue encloses.

" O father, what a hell of witchcraft lies
In the small orb of one particular tear!
But with the inundation of the eyes
What rocky heart to water will not wear?
What breast so cold that is not warmed here?
O cleft effect! cold modesty, hot wrath,
Both fire from hence and chill extincture hath!

" For lo! his passion, but an art of craft,
Even there resolv'd my reason into tears;
There my white stole of chastity I daff'd,
Shook off my sober guards, and civil^b fears;
Appear to him, as he to me appears,
All melting; though our drops this difference bore,
His poison'd me, and mine did him restore.

" In him a plenitude of subtle matter,
Applied to cautels,^c all strange forms receives,
Of burning blushes, or of weeping water,
Or swooning paleness; and he takes and leaves,
In either's aptness, as it best deceives,
To blush at speeches rank, to weep at woes,
Or to turn white and swoon at tragic shows;

" That not a heart which in his level came
Could scape the hail of his all-hurting aim,
Showing fair nature is both kind and tame;
And veil'd in them, did win whom he would maim:
Against the thing he sought he would exclaim;
When he most burn'd in heart-wish'd luxury,
He preach'd pure maid, and prais'd cold chastity.

Gate—got, procured.

b Civil—decorous.

Cautels—deceitful purposes.

" Thus merely with the garment of a Grace
The naked and concealed fiend he cover'd,
That the unexperienc'd gave the tempter place,
Which, like a cherubin, above them hover'd.
Who, young and simple, would not be so lover'd
Ah me! I fell; and yet do question make
What I should do again for such a sake.

" O, that infected moisture of his eye,
O, that false fire which in his cheek so glow'd,
O, that forc'd thunder from his heart did fly,
O, that sad breath his spongy lungs bestow'd,
O, all that borrow'd motion, seeming ow'd,^a
Would yet again betray the fore-betray'd,
And new pervert a reconciled maid!"

^a *Ow'd*—owned; his own.

End of
A Lover's Complaint.

THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM.

I.

DID not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,
'Gainst whom the world could not hold argument,
Persuade my heart to this false perjury ?
Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.
A woman I forswore ; but I will prove,
Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee :
My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love ;
Thy grace being gain'd cures all disgrace in me.
My vow was breath, and breath a vapour is ;
Then, thou fair sun, that on this earth doth shine,
Exhale this vapour vow ; in thee it is :
If broken, then it is no fault of mine.
If by me broke, what fool is not so wise
To lose an oath, to win a paradise ?^a

II.

Sweet Cytherea, sitting by a brook,
With young Adonis, lovely, fresh, and green,
Did court the lad with many a lovely look,
Such looks as none could look but beauty's queen.
She told him stories to delight his ear ;
She show'd him favours to allure his eye ;
To win his heart, she touch'd him here and there :
Touches so soft still conquer chastity.

^a The foregoing Sonnet appears, with some variations, in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' the first edition of which was printed in 1598.

But whether unripe years did want conceit,
 Or he refus'd to take her figur'd proffer,
 The tender nibbler would not touch the bait,
 But smile and jest at every gentle offer :
 Then fell she on her back, fair queen, and toward ;
 He rose and ran away ; ah, fool too froward !

III.

If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love ?
 O never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd :
 Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll constant prove ;
 Those thoughts, to me like oaks, to thee like osiers
 bow'd.
 Study his bias leaves, and makes his book thine eyes,
 Where all those pleasures live that art can comprehend.
 If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice ;
 Well learned is that tongue that well can thee com-
 mend ;
 All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder ;
 Which is to me some praise, that I thy parts admire :
 Thine eye Jove's lightning seems, thy voice his dreadful
 thunder,
 Which (not to anger bent) is music and sweet fire.
 Celestial as thou art, O do not love that wrong,
 To sing the heavens' praise with such an earthly
 tongue.^a

IV.

Scarce had the sun dried up the dewy morn,
 And scarce the herd gone to the hedge for shade,
 When Cytherea, all in love forlorn,
 A longing tarriance for Adonis made,
 Under an osier growing by a brook,
 A brook where Adon used to cool his spleen.

^a This Sonnet also occurs in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' in which copy there are variations in several lines.

Hot was the day ; she hotter that did look
 For his approach, that often there had been.
 Anon he comes, and throws his mantle by,
 And stood stark naked on the brook's green brim ;
 The sun look'd on the world with glorious eye,
 Yet not so wistly as this queen on him :

He, spying her, bounc'd in, whereas he stood ;
 O Jove, quoth she, why was not I a flood ?

V.

Fair is my love, but not so fair as fickle ;
 Mild as a dove, but neither true nor trusty ;
 Brighter than glass, and yet, as glass is, brittle
 Softer than wax, and yet, as iron, rusty :

A lily pale, with damask die to grace her,
 None fairer, nor none falser to deface her.

Her lips to mine how often hath she join'd,
 Between each kiss her oaths of true love swearing !
 How many tales to please me hath she coin'd,
 Dreading my love, the loss thereof still fearing !
 Yet in the midst of all her pure protestings,
 Her faith, her oaths, her tears, and all were jestings.

She burn'd with love, as straw with fire flameth,
 She burn'd out love, as soon as straw out burneth ;
 She fram'd the love, and yet she foil'd the framing,
 She bade love last, and yet she fell a turning.

Was this a lover, or a lecher whether ?
 Bad in the best, though excellent in neither.

VI.

If music and sweet poetry agree,
 As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
 Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
 Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.

Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
 Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
 Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such,
 As, passing all conceit, needs no defence.
 Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound
 That Phœbus' lute, the queen of music, makes;
 And I in deep delight am chiefly drown'd,
 Whenas himself to singing he betakes.
 One god is god of both, as poets feign;
 One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.

VII.

Fair was the morn, when the fair queen of love,^a

* * * * *

Paler for sorrow than her milk-white dove,
 For Adon's sake, a youngster proud and wild;
 Her stand she takes upon a steep-up hill:
 Anon Adonis comes with horn and hounds;
 She, silly queen, with more than love's good will,
 Forbade the boy he should not pass those grounds;
 Once, quoth she, did I see a fair sweet youth
 Here in these brakes deep-wounded with a boar,
 Deep in the thigh, a spectacle of ruth!
 See in my thigh, quoth she, here was the sore:
 She showed hers; he saw more wounds than one,
 And blushing fled, and left her all alone.

VIII.

Sweet rose, fair flower, untimely pluck'd, soon vaded,^b
 Pluck'd in the bud, and vaded in the spring!
 Bright orient pearl, alack! too timely shaded!
 For creature, kill'd too soon by death's sharp sting!
 Like a green plum that hangs upon a tree,
 And falls, through wind, before the fall should be.

^a The second line is lost.

^b *Vaded*—faded.

I weep for tnee, and yet no cause I have;
 For why ? thou left'st me nothing in thy will.
 And yet thou left'st me more than I did crave;
 For why ? I craved nothing of thee still :
 O yes, dear friend, I pardon crave of thee ;
 Thy discontent thou didst bequeath to me.

IX.

Venus, with Adonis^a sitting by her,
 Under a myrtle shade, began to woo him :
 She told the youngling how god Mars did try her,
 And as he fell to her, she fell to him.
 Even thus, quoth she, the warlike god embrac'd me ;
 And then she clipp'd Adonis in her arms :
 Even thus, quoth she, the warlike god unlac'd me ;
 As if the boy should use like loving charms.
 Even thus, quoth she, he seized on my lips,
 And with her lips on his did act the seizure ;
 And as she fetched breath, away he skips,
 And would not take her meaning nor her pleasure.
 Ah ! that I had my lady at this bay,
 To kiss and clip me till I run away !

X.

Crabbed age and youth
 Cannot live together ;
 Youth is full of pleasance,
 Age is full of care :
 Youth like summer morn,
 Age like winter weather ;
 Youth like summer brave,
 Age like winter bare.
 Youth is full of sport,
 Age's breath is short ;

^a This Sonnet is found in 'Fidessa,' by B. Griffin, 1596.
 There are great variations in that copy.

Youth is nimble, age is lame :
 Youth is hot and bold,
 Age is weak and cold ;
 Youth is wild, and age is tame.
 Age, I do abhor thee,
 Youth, I do adore thee ;
 O, my love, my love is young !
 Age, I do defy thee ;
 O sweet shepherd, hie thee,
 For methinks thou stay'st too long.

XI.

Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good,
 A shining gloss, that vadeth suddenly ;
 A flower that dies, when first it 'gins to bud ;
 A brittle glass, that 's broken presently :
 A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,
 Lost, vaded, broken, dead within an hour.

And as goods lost are sold or never found,
 As vaded gloss no rubbing will refresh,
 As flowers dead lie wither'd on the ground,
 As broken glass no cement can redress,^a
 So beauty, blemish'd once, for ever 's lost,
 In spite of physic, painting, pain, and cost.

XII.

Good night, good rest. Ah ! neither be my share :
 She bade good night, that kept my rest away ;
 And daff'd me to a cabin hang'd with care,
 To descant on the doubts of my decay.

^a In the twenty-ninth volume of the ' Gentleman's Magazine, a copy of this poem is given, as from an ancient manuscript, in which there are the following variations :—

“ And as goods lost are sold or never found,
 As faded gloss no rubbing will *excite*,
 As flowers dead lie wither'd on the ground,
 As broken glass no cement can *unite*.”

Farewell, quoth she, and come again to-morrow ;
Fare well I could not, for I supp'd with sorrow.

Yet at my parting sweetly did she smile,
In scorn or friendship, nill I construe whether :
'T may be, she joy'd to jest at my exile,
'T may be, again to make me wander thither :
 Wander, a word for shadows like myself,
As take the pain, but cannot pluck the pelf.

Lord, how mine eyes throw gazes to the east !
My heart doth charge the watch ; the morning rise
Doth cite each moving sense from idle rest.
Not daring trust the office of mine eyes,
 While Philomela sits and sings, I sit and mark,
And wish her lays were tuned like the lark ;

For she doth welcome daylight with her ditty,
And drives away dark dismal-dreaming night :
The night so pack'd, I post unto my pretty ;
Heart hath his hope, and eyes their wished sight ;
 Sorrow chang'd to solace, solace mix'd with sorrow ;
For why ? she sigh'd, and bade me come to morrow.

Were I with her, the night would post too soon ;
But now are minutes added to the hours ;
To spite me now, each minute seems a moon ;^a
Yet not for me, shine sun to succour flowers !
 Pack night, peep day ; good day, of night now
 borrow ;
Short, night, to-night, and length thyself to-morrow.

^a *A moon*. The original has *an hour*—evidently a misprint. The emendation of *moon*, in the sense of *month*, is by Steevens, and it ought to atone for some faults of the commentator.



SONNETS

TO

SUNDRY NOTES OF MUSIC.

XIV.

It was a lording's daughter, the fairest one of three,
That liked of her master as well as well might be,
Till looking on an Englishman, the fairest that eye
could see,

Her fancy fell a turning.

Long was the combat doubtful, that love with love did
fight,

To leave the master loveless, or kill the gallant knight :
To put in practice either, alas it was a spite

Unto the silly damsel.

But one must be refused, more mickle was the pain,
That nothing could be used, to turn them both to gain,
For of the two the trusty knight was wounded with
disdain :

Alas, she could not help it !

Thus art, with arms contending, was victor of the day,
Which by a gift of learning did bear the maid away ;
Then lullaby, the learned man hath got the lady gay ;

For now my song is ended.

XV.

On a day (alack the day !),
Love, whose month was ever May,
Spied a blossom passing fair,
Playing in the wanton air :
Through the velvet leaves the wind,
All unseen, 'gan passage find ;
That the lover, sick to death,
Wish'd himself the heaven's breath.

Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow;
 Air, would I might triumph so!
 But, alas, my hand hath sworn
 Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn:
 Vow, alack, for youth unmeet,
 Youth, so apt to pluck a sweet.
 Thou for whom Jove would swear
 Juno but an Ethiop were;
 And deny himself for Jove,
 Turning mortal for thy love.^a

XVI.

My flocks feed not,
 My ewes breed not,
 My rams speed not,
 All is amiss:
 Love is dying,
 Faith's defying,
 Heart's denying,
 Causer of this.^b
 All my merry jigs are quite forgot,
 All my lady's love is lost, God wot:
 Where her faith was firmly fix'd in love,
 There a nay is plac'd without remove.
 One silly cross
 Wrought all my loss;
 O frowning Fortune, cursed, fickle dame!
 For now I see,
 Inconstancy
 More in women than in men remain.

^a This beautiful little poem also occurs, with variations, in 'Love's Labour's Lost.'

^b We have two other ancient copies of this poem—one in 'England's Helicon,' 1600; the other in a collection of Madrigals by Thomas Weelkes, 1597.

In black mourn I,
All fears scorn I,
Love hath forlorn me,
Living in thrall :
Heart is bleeding,
All help needing,
(O cruel speeding !)

Fraughted with gall.
My shepherd's pipe can sound no deal,^a
My wether's bell rings doleful knell ;
My curtail dog, that wont to have play'd,
Plays not at all, but seems afraid ;
With sighs so deep,
Procures^b to weep,
In howling wise, to see my doleful plight.
How sighs resound
Through heartless ground,
Like a thousand vanquish'd men in bloody fight !

Clear wells spring not,
Sweet birds sing not,
Green plants bring not
Forth ; they die :
Herds stand weeping,
Flocks all sleeping,
Nymphs back peeping
Fearfully.

All our pleasure known to us poor swains,
All our merry meetings on the plains,
All our evening sport from us is fled,
All our love is lost, for love is dead.
Farewell, sweet lass,
Thy like ne'er was

^a *No deal*—in no degree : *some deal* and *no deal* were common expressions.

^b *Procures*. The curtail dog is the nominative case to this verb.

For a sweet content, the cause of all my moan :
 Poor Coridon
 Must live alone,
 Other help for him I see that there is none.

Whenas thine eye hath chose the dame,
 And stall'd the deer that thou shouldst strike,
 Let reason rule things worthy blame,
 As well as fancy, partial might : ^a
 Take counsel of some wiser head,
 Neither too young, nor yet unwed.

And when thou com'st thy tale to tell,
 Smooth not thy tongue with filed talk,
 Lest she some subtle practice smell ;
 (A cripple soon can find a halt :)
 But plainly say thou lov'st her well,
 And set her person forth to sell.

What though her frowning brows be bent,
 Her cloudy looks will calm ere night ;
 And then too late she will repent,
 That thus dissembled her delight ;
 And twice desire, ere it be day,
 That which with scorn she put away.

What though she strive to try her strength,
 And ban and brawl, and say thee nay,
 Her feeble force will yield at length,
 When craft hath taught her thus to say :
 " Had women been so strong as men,
 In faith you had not had it then."

^a *Fancy* is here used as *love*, and *might* as *power*. Steevens, mischievously we should imagine, changed *partial might* to *partial tike* ; and Malone adopts this reading, which makes Cupid a bull-dog.

And to her will frame all thy ways ;
Spare not to spend,—and chiefly there
Where thy desert may merit praise,
By ringing in thy lady's ear :
 The strongest castle, tower, and town,
 The golden bullet beats it down.

Serve always with assured trust,
And in thy suit be humble, true ;
Unless thy lady prove unjust,
Press never thou to choose anew :
 When time shall serve, be thou not slack
 To proffer, though she put thee back.

The wiles and guiles that women work,
Dissembled with an outward show,
The tricks and toys that in them lurk,
The cock that treads them shall not know.
 Have you not heard it said full oft,
 A woman's nay doth stand for nought ?

Think women still to strive with men,
To sin, and never for to saint :
There is no heaven, by holy then,
When time with age shall them attain.
 Were kisses all the joys in bed,
 One woman would another wed.

But soft ; enough,—too much I fear,
Lest that my mistress hear my song ;
She 'll not stick to round me i' th' ear,
To teach my tongue to be so long ;
 Yet will she blush, here be it said,
 To hear her secrets so bewray'd.

XVIII.

Live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove

That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
And all the craggy mountains yields.

There will we sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, by whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee a bed of roses,
With a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Then live with me and be my love.

LOVE'S ANSWER.

If that the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love.

XIX.^a

As it fell upon a day,
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap, and birds did sing,
Trees did grow, and plants did spring:
Everything did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone:
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Lean'd her breast up-till a thorn,

^a This poem is also incompletely printed in 'England's Helicon;' where it bears the signature *Ignoto*.

And there sung the dolefull'st ditty,
That to hear it was great pity :
Fie, fie, fie, now would she cry,
Teru, Teru, by and by :
That to hear her so complain,
Scarce I could from tears refrain ;
For her griefs so lively shown,
Made me think upon mine own.
Ah! thought I, thou mouru'st in vain ;
None take pity on thy pain :
Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee ;
Ruthless bears, they will not cheer thee.
King Pandion, he is dead ;
All thy friends are lapp'd in lead :
All thy fellow-birds do sing,
Careless of thy sorrowing.
Even so, poor bird, like thee,
None alive will pity me.
Whilst as fickle Fortune smil'd,
Thou and I were both beguil'd.
Every one that flatters thee
Is no friend in misery.
Words are easy like the wind ;
Faithful friends are hard to find.
Every man will be thy friend,
Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend ;
But if store of crowns be scant,
No man will supply thy want.
If that one be prodigal,
Bountiful they will him call :
And with such-like flattering,
" Pity but he were a king."
If he be addict to vice,
Quickly him they will entice ;
If to women he be bent,
They have him at commandement ;
But if fortune once do frown,
Then farewell his great renown ;

They that fawn'd on him before,
Use his company no more.
He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy need ;
If thou sorrow, he will weep ;
If thou wake, he cannot sleep :
Thus of every grief in heart
He with thee doth bear a part.
These are certain signs to know
Faithful friend from flattering foe.

SONG.

Take, oh, take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn,
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn :
But my kisses bring again,
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain.

Hide, oh, hide those hills of snow,
Which thy frozen bosom bears,
On whose tops the pinks that grow
Are of those that April wears.
But first set my poor heart free,
Bound in those icy chains by thee.*

* The collection entitled ' The Passionate Pilgrim,' &c., ends with the Sonnet to Sundry Notes of Music which we have numbered xix. Maloué adds to the collection this exquisite song, of which we find the first verse in ' Measure for Measure.'

VERSES AMONG THE ADDITIONAL POEMS
TO CHESTER'S LOVE'S MARTYR,

PRINTED IN 1601.

LET the bird of loudest lay,
On the sole Arabian tree,^a
Herald sad and trumpet be,
To whose sound chaste wings obey.

But thou, shrieking harbinger,
Foul pre-currer of the fiend,
Augur of the fever's end,
To this troop come thou not near.

From this session interdict
Every fowl of tyrant wing,
Save the eagle, feather'd king :
Keep the obsequy so strict.

Let the priest in surplice white,
That defunctive music can,^b
Be the death-divining swan,
Lest the requiem lack his right.

And thou, treble-dated crow
That thy sable gender mak'st
With the breath thou giv'st and tak'st,
'Mongst our mourners shalt thou go.

^a There is a curious coincidence in a passage in 'The Tempest':—

“ Now I will believe
That there are unicorns; that in Arabia
There is one tree, the phœnix' throne.”

^b Can—knows.

Here the anthem doth commence :
 Love and constancy is dead ;
 Phoenix and the turtle fled
 In a mutual flame from hence.

So they lov'd, as love in twain
 Had the essence but in one ;
 Two distincts, division none :
 Number there in love was slain.

Hearts remote, yet not asunder ;
 Distance, and no space was seen
 'Twixt the turtle and his queen :
 But in them it were a wonder.

So between them love did shine,
 That the turtle saw his right
 Flaming in the phoenix' sight :
 Either was the other's mine.

Property was thus appall'd,
 That the self was not the same ;
 Single nature's double name
 Neither two nor one was call'd.

Reason, in itself confounded,
 Saw division grow together ;
 To themselves yet either-neither,
 Simple were so well compounded :

That it cried how true a twain
 Seemeth this concordant one !
 Love hath reason, reason none,
 If what parts can so remain.

Whereupon it made this threne ^a
 To the phoenix and the dove,
 Co-supremes and stars of love ,
 As chorus to their tragic scene.

^a *Threne*—funereal song.

THRENOS.

Beauty, truth, and rarity,
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclos'd in cinders lie.

Death is now the phœnix' nest ;
And the turtle's loyal breast
To eternity doth rest,

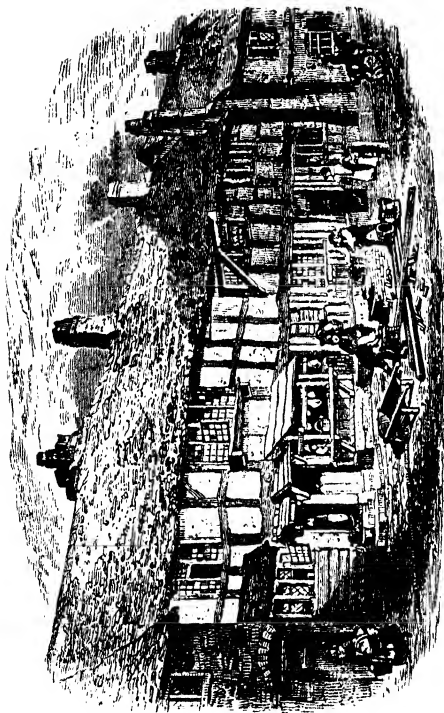
Leaving no posterity :—
'T was not their infirmity,
It was married chastity.

Truth may seem, but cannot be :
Beauty brag, but 't is not she ;
Truth and beauty buried be.

To this urn let those repair
That are either true or fair ;
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

End of Verses.





[House in Henley-street, about 1820.]

F A C T S
CONNECTED WITH THE
L I F E A N D W R I T I N G S
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPERE.

ABRIDGED
FROM 'WILLIAM SHAKSPERE, A BIOGRAPHY.'

BY THE AUTHOR.



THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPERE.

ON the 22nd of August, 1485, there was a battle fought for the crown of England, a short battle ending in a decisive victory. The battle-field was Bosworth. Was there in that victorious army of the Earl of Richmond an Englishman bearing the name of Chacksper, or Shakespeyre, or Schakespere, or Schakespeire, or Schakspere, or Shakespere, or Shakspere,*—a martial name, however spelt? Of the warlike achievements of this Shakspere there is no record: his name or his deeds would have no interest for us unless there had been born, eighty years after this battle-day, a direct descendant from him—

“ Whose muse, full of high thought’s invention,
Doth like himself *heroically sound* ;” †—

A list of the brethren and sisters of the Guild of Knowle, near Rowington, in Warwickshire, exhibits a great number of the name of Shakspere in that fraternity, from about 1460 to 1527; and the names are spelt with the diversity here given, *Shakspere* being the latest.

† Spenser.

a Shakspeare, of whom it was also said—

“ He seems to *shake a lance* .

As brandish'd at the eyes of ignorance.”*

A public document bearing the date of 1596 affirms of John Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, the father of William Shakspeare, that his “ parent and late antecessors were, for their *valiant* and faithful services, advanced and rewarded of the most prudent prince King Henry VII. of famous memory ;” and it adds, “ sithence which time they have continued at those parts [Warwickshire] in good reputation and credit.” Another document of a similar character, bearing the date of 1599, also affirms upon “ creditable report,” of “ John Shakspeare, now of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, gentleman,” that his “ parent and great-grandfather, late antecessor, for his faithful and approved service to the late most prudent prince King Henry VII. of famous memory, was advanced and rewarded with lands and tenements, given to him in those parts of Warwickshire, where they have continued by some descents in good reputation and credit.” Such are the recitals of two several grants of arms to John Shakspeare, confirming a previous grant made to him in 1569.

The great-grandson of the faithful and approved servant of Henry VII., John Shakspeare, was a burgess of the corporation of Stratford, and was in all probability born about 1530. The family had continued in those parts, “ by some descents ;” but how they were occupied in the business of life, what was their station

Ben Jenson.

in society, how they branched out into other lines of Shaksperes, we have no record.

In 1599 John Shakspeare a second time went to the College of Arms, and, producing his own "ancient coat of arms," said that he had "married the daughter and one of the heirs of Robert Arden, of Wellingcote:" and then the heralds say—"We have likewise upon one other escutcheon impaled the same with the ancient arms of the said Arden of Wellingcote." They add that John Shakspeare, and his children, issue, and posterity, may bear and use the same shield of arms, single or impaled.

The family of Arden was one of the highest antiquity in Warwickshire. Dugdale traces its pedigree uninterruptedly up to the time of Edward the Confessor. The pedigree which Dugdale gives of the Arden family brings us no nearer in the direct line to the mother of Shakspeare than to Robert Arden, her great-grandfather: he was the third son of Walter Arden, who married Eleanor the daughter of John Hampden, of Buckinghamshire; and he was brother to Sir John Arden, squire for the body to Henry VII. Robert's son, also called Robert, was groom of the chamber to Henry VII. He married, and he had a son, also Robert, who married Agnes Webbe. Their youngest daughter was Mary, the mother of William Shakspeare.

High as was her descent, wealthy and powerful as were the numerous branches of her family, Mary Arden, we doubt not, led a life of usefulness as well as innocence, within her native forest hamlet. She had three sisters, and they all, with their mother Agnes, survived their father, who died in December, 1556. His

will is dated the 24th of November in the same year, and the testator styles himself "Robert Arden, of Wylmécote, in the paryche of Aston Cauntlow." Mary, his youngest daughter, from superiority of mind, or some other cause of her father's confidence, occupies the most prominent position in the will. She has an undivided estate and a sum of money; and, from the crop being also bequeathed to her, it is evident that she was considered able to continue the tillage. The estate thus bequeathed to her consisted of about sixty acres of arable and pasture, and a house; and was called Asbies.

In the winter of 1556 was Mary Arden left without the guidance of a father, under this somewhat naked roof-tree, now become her own. Her sister Alice was to occupy another property in Wilmécote with her mother, provided the widow would so consent; and she did consent. And so she lived a somewhat lonely life, till a young yeoman of Stratford, who had probably some acquaintance with her father, came to sit oftener and oftener upon the wooden benches in the old hall—a substantial yeoman, a burgess of the corporation in 1557 or 1558; and then in due season Mary Arden and John Shakspeare were standing before the altar of the parish church of Aston Cantlow, and the house and lands of Asbies became administered by one who took possession "by the right of the said Mary," who thenceforward abided for half a century in the good town of Stratford.

There have been endless theories, old and new, affirmations, contradictions, as to the worldly calling of John Shakspeare. There are ancient registers in Stratford, minutes of the Common Hall, proceedings of

the Court-leet, pleas of the Court of Record, writs, which have been hunted over with unwearied diligence, and yet they tell us nothing, or next to nothing, of John Shakspeare. When he was elected an alderman in 1565, we can trace out the occupations of his brother aldermen, and readily come to the conclusion that the municipal authority of Stratford was vested, as we may naturally suppose it to have been, in the hands of substantial tradesmen, brewers, bakers, butchers, grocers, victuallers, mercers, woollen-drapers. Prying into the secrets of time, we are enabled to form some notion of the literary acquirements of this worshipful body. On rare, very rare occasions, the aldermen and burgesses constituting the town council affixed their signatures, for greater solemnity, to some order of the court; and on the 29th of September, in the seventh of Elizabeth, upon an order that John Wheler should take the office of bailiff, we have nineteen names subscribed, aldermen and burgesses. There is something in this document which suggests a motive higher than mere curiosity for calling up these dignitaries from their happy oblivion, saying to each, "Dost thou use to write thy name? or hast thou a mark to thyself like an honest plain-dealing man?" Alas! out of the nineteen seven only can answer, "I thank God I have been so well brought up that I can write my name." It is a matter of controversy whether John Shakspeare was one of the more clerkly corporators. We think he was; others believe he was not. In 1556, the year that Robert, the father of Mary Arden, died, John Shakspeare was admitted at the court-leet to two copyhold estates in Stratford.

The jurors of the leet present that George Turnor had alienated to John Shakspeare and his heirs one tenement, with a garden and croft, and other premises, in Grenehyll-street, held of the lord at an annual quit-rent; and John Shakspeare, who is present in court and does fealty, is admitted to the same. The same jurors present that Edward West has alienated to John Shakspeare one tenement and a garden adjacent in Henley Street, who is in the same way admitted, upon fealty done to the lord. Here then is John Shakspeare, before his marriage, the purchaser of two copyholds in Stratford, both with gardens, and one with a croft, or small enclosed field. In 1570 John Shakspeare is holding, as tenant under William Clopton, a meadow of fourteen acres, with its appurtenance, called Ingon, at the annual rent of eight pounds. This rent, equivalent to at least forty pounds of our present money, would indicate that the appurtenance included a house,—and a very good house. This meadow of Ingon forms part of a large property known by that name near Clopton-house. When John Shakspeare married, the estate of Asbies, within a short ride of Stratford, came also into his possession. With these facts before us, scanty as they are, can we reasonably doubt that John Shakspeare was living upon his own land, renting the land of others, actively engaged in the business of cultivation, in an age when tillage was becoming rapidly profitable,—so much so that men of wealth very often thought it better to take the profits direct than to share them with the tenant?

And is all this, it may be said, of any importance in

looking at the life of William Shakspeare—a man who stands above all other individual men, above all ranks of men ; in comparison with whom, in his permanent influence upon mankind, generations of nobles, fighting men, statesmen, princes, are but as dust? It is something, we think. It offers a better, because a more natural, explanation of the circumstances connected with the early life of the great poet than those stories which would make him of obscure birth and servile employments. Take old Aubrey's story, the shrewd learned gossip and antiquary, who survived Shakspeare some eighty years :—" Mr. William Shakspeare was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick. His father was a butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade ; but when he killed a calf he would do it in a high style, and make a speech. There was at that time another butcher's son in this town that was held not at all inferior to him for a natural wit, his acquaintance and coetanean, but died young." The story, however, has a variation. There was at Stratford, in the year 1693, a clerk of the parish church, eighty years old,—that is, he was three years old when William Shakspeare died,—and he, pointing to the monument of the poet, with the pithy remark that he was the " best of his family," proclaimed to a member of one of the Inns of Court that " this Shakspeare was formerly in this town bound apprentice to a butcher, but that he ran from his master to London." His father was a butcher, says Aubrey ; he was apprenticed to a butcher, says the parish clerk.

Akin to the butcher's trade is that of the dealer in wool. It is upon the authority of Betterton, the actor, who, in the beginning of the last century, made a journey into Warwickshire to collect anecdotes relating to Shakspeare, that Rowe tells us that John Shakspeare was a dealer in wool :—" His family, as appears by the register and public writings relating to that town, were of good figure and fashion there, and are mentioned as gentlemen. His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool, had so large a family, ten children in all, that, though he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment." Tradition is here, we think, becoming a little more assimilated with the truth. The considerable dealer in wool might very well have been the landed proprietor, the cultivator, that we believe John Shakspeare to have been. Nor indeed was the incidental business even of a butcher, a slayer and seller of carcasses, incompatible with that occupation of a landholder. Harrison (1590), who mingles laments at the increasing luxury of the farmer with somewhat contradictory denouncements of the oppression of the tenant by the landlord, holds that the landlord is monopolising the tenant's profits :—" Most sorrowful of all to understand, that men of great port and countenance are so far from suffering their farmers to have any gain at all, that *they themselves become graziers, BUTCHERS, tanners, SHEEPMASTERS, woodmen, and denique quid non*, thereby to enrich themselves, and bring all the wealth of the country into their own hands, leaving the commonalty weak, or as an idol with broken or feeble arms, which may in time

of peace have a plausible show, but, when necessity shall enforce, have an heavy and bitter sequel." Has not Harrison solved the mystery of the butcher, and explained the tradition of the woolman?

There is an entry in the Bailiff's Court of Stratford, in 1555, which shows us one John Shakspeare, a glover. It does not follow that if this record be of the father of William Shakspeare, a young man in 1555, that he was always a glover. If he were a glover in 1555, he was subsequently a holder of land—a land proprietor.*

The Register of Baptisms of the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon shows that William, the son of John Shakspeare, was baptized on the 26th April, 1564. And when born? The want of such information is a defect in all parish-registers. Baptism so immediately followed birth in those times, when infancy was surrounded with greater dangers than in our own days of improved medical science, that we may believe that William Shakspeare first saw the light only a day or two previous to this legal record of his existence. There is no direct evidence that he was born on the 23rd of April, according to the common belief. But there was probably a tradition to that effect; for some years ago the Rev. Joseph Greene, a master of the grammar-school at Stratford, in an extract which he made from the Register of Shakspeare's baptism, wrote in the margin, "Born on the 23rd." We turn back to the first year of the registry, 1558, and we find the baptism of Joan, daughter to John Shakspeare, on the 15th of September. Again, in 1562, on the 2nd of December, Margaret, daughter to John Shakspeare, is

* See page 263.

baptized. In the entry of burials in 1563 we find, under date of April 30, that Margaret closed a short life in five months. We look forward, and in 1566 find the birth of another son registered:—Gilbert, son of John Shakspeare was baptized on the 13th of October of that year. In 1569 there is the registry of the baptism of a daughter, Joan, daughter of John Shakspeare, on the 15th of April. Thus, the registry of a second Joan leaves no reasonable doubt that the first died, and that a favourite name was preserved in the family. In 1571 another daughter was born,—Anne, daughter of Master John Shakspeare, baptized on the 28th of September. In 1574 another son was baptized, —Richard, son of Master John Shakspeare, on the 11th of March. The register of sorrow and blighted hope shows that Anne was buried on the 4th of April, 1579. The last entry, which determines the extent of John Shakspeare's family, is that of Edmund, son of Master John Shakspeare, baptized on the 3rd of May, 1580. Here, then, we find that two sisters of William were removed by death, probably before his birth. In two years and a half another son, Gilbert, came to be his playmate; and when he was five years old that most precious gift to a loving boy was granted, a sister, who grew up with him. Then came another sister, who faded untimely. When he was ten years old he had another brother to lead by the hand into the green meadows. When he was grown into youthful strength, a boy of sixteen, his youngest brother was born. William, Gilbert, Joan, Richard, Edmund, constituted the whole of the family amongst whom John Shakspeare was to share his means of existence. Rowe, we have already

seen, mentions the large family of John Shakspeare, "ten children in all." Malone has established very satisfactorily the origin of this error into which Rowe has fallen. In later years there was another John Shakspeare in Stratford. In the books of the corporation the name of John Shakspeare, shoemaker, can be traced in 1586; in the register in 1584 we find him married to Margery Roberts, who dies in 1587; he is, without doubt, married a second time, for in 1589, 1590, and 1591, Ursula, Humphrey, and Philip are born. It is unquestionable that these are not the children of the father of William Shakspeare, for they are entered in the register as the daughter, or sons, of John Shakspeare, without the style which our John Shakspeare always bore after 1569—"Magister." There can be no doubt that the mother of all the children of *Master* John Shakspeare was Mary Arden; for in proceedings in Chancery in 1597 it is set forth that John Shakspeare and his wife Mary, in the 20th Elizabeth, 1577, mortgaged her inheritance of Asbies. Nor can there be a doubt that the children born before 1569, when he is styled John Shakspeare, without the honourable addition of *Master*, were also *her* children; for in 1599, when *William* Shakspeare is an opulent man, application is made to the College of Arms, that John Shakspeare, and his issue and posterity, might use a "shield of arms," impaled with the arms of Shakspeare and Arden. This application would in all probability have been at the instance of John Shakspeare's eldest son and heir. The history of the family up to the period of William Shakspeare's manhood is as clear as can reasonably be expected.

The year of William Shakspeare's birth was a fearful year for Stratford. The plague raged with terrific violence in the little town. It was the same epidemic which ravaged Europe in that year; which in the previous year had desolated London, and still continued there. The red cross was probably not on the door of John Shakspeare's dwelling. "Fortunately for mankind," says Malone, "it did not reach the house where the infant Shakspeare lay; for not one of that name appears on the dead list."

The parish of Stratford, then, was unquestionably the birth-place of William Shakspeare. But in what part of Stratford dwelt his parents in the year 1564? It was ten years after this that his father became the purchaser of two freehold houses in Henley Street—houses which still exist. Nine years before William Shakspeare was born, his father had also purchased two copyhold tenements in Stratford—one in Greenhill Street, one in Henley Street. The copyhold house in Henley Street, purchased in 1555, was unquestionably not one of the freehold houses in the same street, purchased in 1574; yet, from Malone's loose way of stating that in 1555 the *lease* of a house in Henley Street was assigned to John Shakspeare, it has been conjectured that he purchased in 1574 the house he had occupied for many years. As he purchased two houses in 1555 in different parts of the town, it is not likely that he occupied both; he might not have occupied either. Before he purchased the two houses in Henley Street, in 1574, he occupied fourteen acres of meadow-land, with appurtenances, at a very high rent; the property is called Ingon meadow in "the Close Rolls." Dug-

dale calls the place where it was situated "Inge;" saying that it was a member of the manor of Old Stratford, "and signifyeth in our old English a meadow or low ground, the name well agreeing with its situation." It is about a mile and a quarter from the town of Stratford, on the road to Warwick. William Shakspeare, then, might have been born at either of his father's copyhold houses, in Greenhill Street, or in Henley Street; he might have been born at Ingon; or his father might have occupied one of the two freehold houses in Henley Street at the time of the birth of his eldest son. Tradition says that William Shakspeare *was* born in one of these houses; tradition points out the very room in which he was born. Let us not disturb the belief. To look upon that ancient house—perhaps now one of the oldest in Stratford—pilgrims have come from every region where the name of Shakspeare is known. The property passed into a younger branch of the poet's family; the descendants of that branch grew poorer and poorer; they sold off its orchards and gardens; they divided and subdivided it into smaller tenements; it became partly a butcher's shop, partly a little inn. The external appearance was greatly altered, and its humble front rendered still humbler. The windows in the roof were removed; and the half which had become the inn received a new brick casing. The central portion is that which is now shown as the birth-place of the illustrious man—"the myriad-minded."

There is a passage in one of Shakspeare's Sonnets, the 89th, which has induced a belief that he had the m^{ind}

fortune of a physical defect, which would render him peculiarly the object of maternal solicitude :—

“ Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence :
Speak of my *lame*ness, and I straight will halt ;
Against thy reasons making no defence.”

Again, in the 37th Sonnet :—

“ As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made *lame* by fortune's dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth.”

These lines have been interpreted to mean that William Shakspeare was literally lame, and that his lameness was such as to limit him, when he became an actor, to the representation of the parts of old men. We should, on the contrary, have no doubt whatever that the *verses* we have quoted may be most fitly received in a metaphorical sense, were there not some subsequent lines in the 37th Sonnet which really appear to have a literal meaning ; and thus to render the previous *lame* and *lameness* expressive of something more than the general self-abasement which they would otherwise appear to imply. In the following lines *lame* means something distinct from *poor* and *despised* :—

“ For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in thy parts do crowned sit,
I make my love engrafted to this store :
So then I am not *lame*, poor, nor despis'd,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give.”

Of one thing, however, we may be quite sure—that, if Shakspeare were lame, his infirmity was not such as to disqualify him for active bodily exertion. The same

series of verses that have suggested this belief that he was lame also show that he was a horseman. His entire works exhibit that familiarity with external nature, with rural occupations, with athletic sports, which is incompatible with an inactive boyhood. It is not impossible that some natural defect, or some accidental injury, may have modified the energy of such a child, and have cherished in him that love of books, and traditional lore, and silent contemplation, without which his intellect could not have been nourished into its wondrous strength. But we cannot imagine William Shakspeare a petted child, chained to home, not breathing the free air upon his native hills, denied the boy's privilege to explore every nook of his own river. We would imagine him communing from the first with Nature, as Gray has painted him—

“ The *dauntless* child
Stretch'd forth his little arms and smil'd.”

The only qualifications necessary for the admission of a boy into the Free Grammar School of Stratford were, that he should be a resident in the town, of seven years of age, and able to read. The Grammar School was essentially connected with the Corporation of Stratford; and it is impossible to imagine that, when the son of John Shakspeare became qualified by age for admission to a school where the best education of the time was given, literally for nothing, his father, in that year, being chief alderman, should not have sent him to the school. We assume, without any hesitation, that William Shakspeare did receive in every just sense of the word the education of a scholar; and as such edu-

cation was to be had at his own door, we also assume that he was brought up at the Free Grammar School of his own town. His earlier instruction would therefore be a preparation for this school, and the probability is that such instruction was given him at home.

A question arises, did William Shakspeare receive his elementary instruction in Christianity from the books sanctioned by the Reformed Church? It has been maintained that his father belonged to the Roman Catholic persuasion. This belief rests upon the following foundation. In the year 1770, Thomas Hart, who then inhabited one of the tenements in Henley Street which had been bequeathed to his family by William Shakspeare's granddaughter, employed a bricklayer to new tile the house; and this bricklayer, by name Mosely, found hidden between the rafters and the tiling a manuscript consisting of six leaves stitched together, which he gave to Mr. Peyton, an alderman of Stratford, who sent it to Mr. Malone, through the Rev. Mr. Devonport, vicar of Stratford. This paper, which was first published by Malone in 1790, is printed also in Reed's Shakspeare and in Drake's 'Shakspeare and his Times.' It consists of fourteen articles, purporting to be a confession of faith of "John Shakspear, an unworthy member of the holy Catholic religion." We have no hesitation whatever in believing this document to be altogether a fabrication. Malone, when he first published the paper in his edition of Shakspeare, said—"I have taken some pains to ascertain the authenticity of this manuscript, and, after a very careful inquiry, am perfectly satisfied that it is genuine." In

1796, however, in his work on the Ireland forgeries, he asserts—"I have since obtained documents that clearly prove it could not have been the composition of any one of our poet's family." We not only do not believe that it was "the composition of any one of our poet's family," but we do not believe that it is the work of a Roman Catholic at all. That John Shakspeare was what we popularly call a Protestant in the year 1568, when his son William was four years old, may be shown by the clearest of proofs. He was in that year the chief magistrate of Stratford; he could not have become so without taking the Oath of Supremacy, according to the statute of the 1st of Elizabeth, 1558-9. To refuse this oath was made punishable with forfeiture and imprisonment, with the pains of præmunire and high treason. "The conjecture," says Chalmers (speaking in support of the authenticity of this confession of faith), "that Shakspeare's family were Roman Catholics is strengthened by the fact that his father declined to attend the corporation meetings, and was at last removed from the corporate body." He was removed from the corporate body in 1585, with a distinct statement of the reason for this removal—his non-attendance when summoned to the halls. According to this reasoning of Chalmers, John Shakspeare did not hesitate to take the Oath of Supremacy when he was chief magistrate in 1564, but retired from the corporation in 1585, where he might have remained without offence to his own conscience or to others, being, in the language of that day, a Popish recusant, to be stigmatized as such, persecuted, and subject to the

most odious restrictions. If he left or was expelled the corporation for his religious opinions, he would, of course, not attend the service of the church, for which offence he would be liable, in 1585, to a fine of 20*l.* per month; and then, to crown the whole, in this his last confession, spiritual will, and testament, he calls upon all his kinsfolks to assist and succour him after his death "with the holy sacrifice of the mass," with a promise that he "will not be ungrateful unto them for so great a benefit," well knowing that by the Act of 1581 the saying of mass was punishable by a year's imprisonment and a fine of 200 marks, and the hearing of it by a similar imprisonment and a fine of 100 marks. The fabrication appears to us as gross as can well be imagined.

To the grammar-school, then, with some preparation, we hold that William Shakspeare goes, about the year 1571. His father is at this time, as we have said, chief alderman of his town; he is a gentleman, now, of repute and authority; he is Master John Shakspeare; and assuredly the worthy curate of the neighbouring village of Luddington, Thomas Hunt, who was also the schoolmaster, would have received his new scholar with some kindness. As his "shining morning face" first passed out of the main street into that old court through which the upper room of learning was to be reached, a new life would be opening upon him. The humble minister of religion who was his first instructor has left no memorials of his talents or his acquirements; and in a few years another master came after him, Thomas Jenkins, also unknown to fame. All praise and honour

be to them; for it is impossible to imagine that the teachers of William Shakspeare were evil instructors—giving the boy husks instead of wholesome aliment. They could not have been harsh and perverse instructors, for such spoil the gentlest natures, and his was always gentle:—"My gentle Shakspeare" is he called by a rough but noble spirit—one in whom was all honesty and genial friendship under a rude exterior. His wondrous abilities could not be spoiled even by ignorant instructors.

The first who attempted to write 'Some Account of the Life of William Shakspeare,' Rowe, says, "His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool, had so large a family, ten children in all, that, though he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free-school, where, it is probable, he acquired what Latin he was master of; but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language." This statement, be it remembered, was written one hundred and thirty years after the event which it professes to record—the early removal of William Shakspeare from the free-school to which he had been sent by his father. We have no hesitation in saying that the statement is manifestly based upon two assumptions, both of which are incorrect:—The first, that his father had a large family of ten children, and was so narrowed in his circumstances that he could not

spare even the *time* of his eldest son, he being taught for nothing ; and, secondly, that the son, by his early removal from the school where he acquired "what Latin he was master of," was prevented attaining a "proficiency in that language," his works manifesting "an ignorance of the ancients." It may be convenient that we should in this place endeavour to dispose of both these assertions.

The family of John Shakspeare did not consist, as we have already shown, of ten children. In the year 1578, when the school education of William may be reasonably supposed to have terminated, and before which period his "assistance at home" would rather have been embarrassing than useful to his father, the family consisted of five children : William, aged fourteen ; Gilbert, twelve ; Joan, nine ; Anne, seven ; and Richard, four. Anne died early in the following year ; and, in 1580, Edmund, the youngest child, was born ; so that the family never exceeded five living at the same time. But still the circumstances of John Shakspeare, even with five children, might have been straitened. The assertion of Rowe excited the persevering diligence of Malone ; and he has collected together a series of documents from which he infers, or leaves the reader to infer, that John Shakspeare and his family gradually sunk from their station of respectability at Stratford into the depths of poverty and ruin. The sixth section of Malone's posthumous 'Life' is devoted to a consideration of this subject. It thus commences : "The manufacture of gloves, which was, at this period, a very flourishing one, both at Stratford and Worcester (in

which latter city it is still carried on with great success), however generally beneficial, should seem, from whatever cause, to have afforded our poet's father but a scanty maintenance." The assumption that John Shakspeare depended for his "maintenance" upon "the manufacture of gloves" rests entirely and absolutely upon one solitary entry in the books of the bailiff's court at Stratford. We have seen the original entry; and though we are not learned enough in palæography to pronounce whether the abridged word which commences the third line describes the occupation of John Shakspeare, this we know, that it does not consist of the letters *Glover*, as Malone prints it, he at the same time abridging the other words which are abbreviations in the record. No other entry in the same book, and there are many, recites the occupation of John Shakspeare; but the subjects in dispute which are sometimes mentioned in these entries look very unlike the litigations of a glover, whether he be plaintiff or defendant. For example, on the 19th of November, 1556, the year after the action against Malone's glover, John Shakspeare is complainant against Henry Field in a plea for unjustly detaining eighteen quarters of grain. This is scarcely the plea of a glover. But, glover or not, he was a landed proprietor and an occupier of land; and he did not, therefore, in the year 1578, depend upon the manufacture of gloves for "a scanty maintenance." However, be his occupation what it may, Malone affirms that "when our author was about fourteen years old" the "distressed situation" of his father was evident: it rests "upon surer grounds than conjecture." The Corporation

books have shown that on particular occasions, such as the visitation of the plague in 1564, John Shakspeare contributed like others to the relief of the poor; but now, in January, 1577-8, he is taxed for the necessities of the borough only to pay half what other aldermen pay; and in November of the same year, whilst other aldermen are assessed fourpence weekly towards the relief of the poor, John Shakspeare "shall not be taxed to pay anything." In 1579 the sum levied upon him for providing soldiers at the charge of the borough is returned, amongst similar sums of other persons, as "unpaid and unaccounted for." Finally, this unquestionable evidence of the books of the borough shows that this merciful forbearance of his brother townsmen was unavailing; for, in an action brought against him in the bailiff's court in the year 1586, he during these seven years having gone on from bad to worse, the return by the serjeants at mace upon a warrant of distress is, that John Shakspeare has nothing upon which distress can be levied. There are other corroborative proofs of John Shakspeare's poverty at this period brought forward by Malone. In this precise year, 1578, he mortgages his wife's inheritance of Asbies to Edmund Lambert for forty pounds; and, in the same year, the will of Mr. Roger Sadler of Stratford, to which is subjoined a list of debts due to him, shows that John Shakspeare was indebted to him five pounds, for which sum Edmund Lambert was a security,—“By which,” says Malone, “it appears that John Shakspeare was then considered insolvent, if not as one depending rather on the credit of others than his own.” It is of little con-

sequence to the present age to know whether an alderman of Stratford, nearly three hundred years past, became unequal to maintain his social position; but to enable us to form a right estimate of the education of William Shakspeare, and of the circumstances in which he was placed at the most influential period of his life, it may not be unprofitable to consider how far these revelations of the private affairs of his father support the case which Malone holds he has so triumphantly proved. The documents which he has brought forward certainly do not constitute the whole case; and, without lending ourselves to a spirit of advocacy, we believe that the inferences which have been drawn from them, and adopted by men of higher mark than their original promulgator, are altogether gratuitous and incongruous. We shall detain our readers a very short time, whilst, implicitly adopting all these discoveries (as they are called),—without attempting to infer that some of the circumstances may apply to another John Shakspeare,—we trace what we think a more probable course of the fortunes of the alderman of Stratford, until the period when his illustrious son had himself become the father of a family.

In the year 1568 John Shakspeare was high bailiff of Stratford. In 1571 he was chief alderman. The duties of the first office demanded a constant residence in Stratford. Beyond occasional attendance, the duties of the second office would be few. In 1570 he is the occupier of a small estate at Ingon, in the parish of Stratford, two miles from the town, at a rent which unquestionably shows that a house of importance was

attached to "the meadow." In 1574 he purchased two freehold houses in Henley Street, with gardens and orchards; and he probably occupied one or both of these. In 1578 he mortgaged the estate of Asbies to Edmund Lambert, who also appears to have been security for him for the sum of five pounds. At the time, then, when Malone holds that John Shakspeare is insolvent, because another is his security for five pounds, and that other the mortgagee of his estate, he is also excused public payments because he is poor. But he is the possessor of two freehold houses in Henley Street, bought in 1574. Malone, a lawyer by profession, supposes that the money for which Asbies was mortgaged went to pay the purchase of the Stratford freeholds; according to which theory, these freeholds had been unpaid for during four years, and the "good and lawful money" was not "in hand" when the vendor parted with the premises. We hold, and we think more reasonably, that in 1578, when he mortgaged Asbies, John Shakspeare became the purchaser, or at any rate the occupier, of lands in the parish of Stratford, but not in the borough; and that, in either case, the money for which Asbies was mortgaged was the capital employed in this undertaking. The lands which were purchased by William Shakspeare of the Combe family, in 1601, are described in the deed as "lying or being within the parish, fields, or town of Old Stretford." But the will of William Shakspeare, he having become the heir-at-law of his father, devises all his lands and tenements "within the towns, hamlets, villages, fields, and grounds of Stratford-upon-

Avon, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe." Old Stratford is a local denomination, essentially different from Bishopton or Welcombe; and, therefore, whilst the lands purchased by the son in 1601 might be those recited in the will as lying in Old Stratford, he might have derived from his father the lands of Bishopton and Welcombe, of the purchase of which by himself we have no record. So, in the same way, the tenements referred to by the will as being in Stratford-upon-Avon, comprised not only the great house purchased by him, but the freeholds in Henley Street which he inherited from his father. Indeed it is expressly stated in a document of 1596, a memorandum upon the grant of arms in the Heralds' College to John Shakspeare, "he hath lands and tenements, of good wealth and substance, 500*l*." The lands of Bishopton and Welcombe are in the parish of Stratford, but not in the borough. Bishopton was a hamlet, having an ancient chapel of ease. We hold, then, that in the year 1578 John Shakspeare ceased, though perhaps not wholly so, to reside within the borough of Stratford. Other aldermen are rated to pay towards the furniture of pikemen, billmen, and archers, six shillings and eight-pence; whilst John Shakspeare is to pay three shillings and four-pence. Why less than other aldermen? The next entry but one, which relates to a brother alderman, answers the question:—

" Robert Bratt, *nothing* IN THIS PLACE."

Again, ten months after,—“It is ordained that every alderman shall pay weekly, towards the relief of the poor, four-pence, save John Shakspeare and *Robert*

Bratt, who shall not be taxed to pay anything." Here John Shakspeare is associated with Robert Bratt, who, according to the previous entry, was to pay nothing in this place; that is, in the *borough* of Stratford, to which the orders of the council alone apply. The return, in 1579, of Mr. Shakspeare as leaving unpaid the sum of three shillings and three pence, was the return upon a levy for the borough, in which, although the possessor of property, he might have ceased to reside. Seven years after this comes the celebrated return to the warrant of distress, that John Shakspeare has nothing to distrain upon. The jurisdiction of the bailiff's court of Stratford is wholly confined to the borough; and out of the borough the officers could not go. We have traced the course of this action in the bailiff's books of Stratford, beyond the entries which Malone gives us. It continued before the court for nearly five months; proceeding after proceeding being taken upon it, with a pertinacity on the part of the defendant which appears far more like the dogged resistance of a wealthy man to a demand which he thought unjust, than that of a man in the depths of poverty, seeking to evade a payment which must be ultimately enforced by the seizure of his goods, or by a prison. The *distringas*, which the officers of the borough of Stratford *could* not execute, was followed by a *capias*; and then, no doubt, the debt was paid, and the heavier fees of the lawyers discharged. Further, in the very year of this action, John Shakspeare ceases to be a member of the corporation; and the circumstances attending his withdrawal or removal from that body are strongly confirmatory of

the view we have taken. "I find," says Malone, "on inspecting the records, that our poet's father had not attended at any hall for the seven preceding years." This is perfectly correct. At these halls, except on the very rarest occasions, the members attending do not sign their names; but after the entry of the preliminary form by the town-clerk,—such as "Stratford Burgus, ad aulam ibid. tent. vi. die Septembris anno regni dñæ Elizabethæ vicesimo octavo,"—the town-clerk enters the names of all the aldermen and burgesses, and there is a dot or other mark placed against the names of those who are in attendance. The last entry in which the name of John Shakspeare is so distinguished as attending occurs in 1579. But at the hall held on the 6th of September, in the 28th of Elizabeth, is this entry:—"At this hall William Smythe and Richard Courte are chosen to be aldermen in the place of John Wheler and John Shaxspere; for that Mr. Wheler doth desyer to be put out of the companye, and Mr. Shaxspere doth not come to the halls when they be warned, nor hath not done of long tyme." Is it not more credible that, from the year 1579 till the year 1586, when he was removed from the corporation, in all probability by his own consent, John Shakspeare was not dwelling in the *borough* of Stratford,—that he had ceased to take an interest in its affairs, although he was unwilling to forego its dignities;—than that during these seven years he was struggling with hopeless poverty; that he allowed his brother aldermen and burgesses to sit in judgment on his means of paying the assessments of the borough; that they consented to reduce and altogether to dis-

charge his assessment, although he was the undoubted possessor of property within the borough; that he proclaimed his poverty in the most abject manner, and proclaimed it untruly whilst he held any property at all, and his lands were mortgaged for a very inadequate sum, when the first object of an embarrassed man would have been to have upheld his credit by making an effort to meet every public demand? What is the most extraordinary thing of all is, that he should have recovered this long humiliation so suddenly that, in 1596, he goes to the College of Arms for additions to his armorial bearings, and states that he is worth five hundred pounds in lands and tenements. During this period he was unquestionably a resident in the *parish* of Stratford; for the register of that parish contains the entry of the burial of a daughter in 1579, and the baptism of a son in 1580. His grandchildren, also, are baptized in that parish in 1583 and 1585. But his assessments in "that place"—the borough—are reduced in 1578, and wholly foregone in 1579. He has ceased to be amenable to the borough assessments. The lands of Welcombe and Bishopton, we may fairly assume, were his home. He has not been dependent upon the trade of Stratford, whether in gloves or wool. He is a cultivator, and his profits are not very variable. His son purchases a large quantity of land in the same district a few years afterwards; and that son himself becomes a cultivator, even whilst he is the most successful dramatist of his time. That son has also his actions in the bailiff's court, as his father had, for corn sold and delivered, of which more hereafter. That son cleaves

to his native place with a love which no fame won, no pleasure enjoyed, in the great capital,—the society of the great, the praises of the learned,—can extinguish. Neither does that son take any part in the affairs of the borough. He purchases the best house in Stratford in 1597, but the records of Stratford show that he had no desire for local honours. The father, instead of sinking into poverty, appears to us to have separated himself from the concerns of the borough, and from the society of the honest men who administered them. He probably had not more happiness in his struggle to maintain the rank of gentleman; but that he did make that struggle is, we think, consistent with all the circumstances upon record. That the children of William Shakspeare should have been brought up at Stratford,—that Stratford should have been his home, although London was his place of necessary sojourn,—is, we think, quite incompatible with the belief that, at the exact period when the poet was gaining rapid wealth as a sharer in the Blackfriars Theatre, the father was so reduced to the extremity of indigence that he had nothing to distract upon in his dwelling in the place where he had dwelt for years, in competence and honour.

Seeing, then, that at any rate in the year 1574, when John Shakspeare purchased two freehold houses in Stratford, it was scarcely necessary for him to withdraw his son William from school, as Rowe has it, on account of the narrowness of his circumstances (the education at that school costing the father nothing), it is not difficult to believe that the son remained there till the

period when boys were usually withdrawn from grammar-schools. In those days the education of the university commenced much earlier than at present. Boys intended for the learned professions, and more especially for the church, commonly went to Oxford and Cambridge at eleven or twelve years of age. If they were not intended for those professions, they probably remained at the grammar-school till they were thirteen or fourteen; and then they were fitted for being apprenticed to tradesmen, or articled to attorneys, a numerous and thriving body in those days of cheap litigation. Many also went early to the Inns of Court, which were the universities of the law, and where there was real study and discipline in direct connection with the several Societies. To assume that William Shakspeare did not stay long enough at the grammar-school of Stratford to obtain a very fair "proficiency in Latin," with some knowledge of Greek, is to assume an absurdity upon the face of the circumstances; and it could never have been assumed at all, had not Rowe, setting out upon a false theory, that, because in the works of Shakspeare "we scarce find any traces of anything that looks like an imitation of the ancients," held that *therefore* "his not copying at least something from them may be an argument of his never having read them." Opposed to this is the statement of Aubrey, much nearer to the times of Shakspeare: "he understood Latin pretty well." Rowe had been led into his illogical inference by the "small Latin and less Greek" of Jonson; the "old mother-wit" of Denham; the "his learning was very little" of Fuller; the "native wood-

notes wild " of Milton,—phrases, every one of which is to be taken with considerable qualification, whether we regard the peculiar characters of the utterers, or the circumstances connected with the words themselves. The question rests not upon the interpretation of the dictum of this authority or that, but upon the indisputable fact that the very earliest writings of Shakspeare are imbued with a spirit of classical antiquity, and that the allusive nature of the learning that manifests itself in them, whilst it offers the best proof of his familiarity with the ancient writers, is a circumstance which has misled those who never attempted to dispute the existence of the learning which was displayed in the direct pedantry of his contemporaries. "*If*," said Hales of Eton, "he had not *read* the classics, he had likewise not *stolen* from them." Marlowe, Greene, Peele, and all the early dramatists, overload their plays with quotation and mythological allusion. According to Hales, they steal, and therefore they have read. He who uses his knowledge skilfully is assumed not to have read.

It is not our intention here to enter upon a general examination of the various opinions that have been held as to the learning of Shakspeare, and the tendency of those opinions to show that he was without learning. We only desire to point out, by a very few observations, that the learning manifested in his early productions does not bear out the assertion of Rowe that his proficiency in the Latin language was interrupted by his early removal from the free-school of Stratford. His youthful poem, '*Venus and Adonis*,' the first heir of his invention, is upon a classical subject. The '*Rape of*

Lucrece' is founded upon a legend of the beginnings of Roman history. Would he have ventured upon these subjects had he been unfamiliar with the ancient writers, from the attentive study of which he could alone obtain the knowledge which would enable him to treat them with propriety? His was an age of sound scholarship. He dedicates both poems to a scholar, and a patron of scholars. Does any one of his contemporaries object that these classical subjects were treated by a young man ignorant of the classics? Will the most critical examination of these poems detect anything that betrays this ignorance? Is there not the most perfect keeping in both these poems,—an original conception of the mode of treating these subjects, advisedly adopted, with the full knowledge of what might be imitated, but preferring the vigorous painting of nature to any imitation? 'Love's Labour's Lost,' undoubtedly one of the earliest comedies, shows—upon the principle laid down by Coleridge, that "a young author's first work almost always bespeaks his recent pursuits"—that the habits of William Shakspeare "had been scholastic, and those of a student." The 'Comedy of Errors' is full of those imitations of the ancients in particular passages which critics have in all cases been too apt to take as the chief evidences of learning. The critics of Shakspeare are puzzled by these imitations; and when they see with what skill he adopts, or amends, or rejects, the incidents of the 'Menæchmi' of Plautus, they have no resource but to contend that his knowledge of Plautus was derived from a wretched translation, published in all probability eight or ten years

after 'The Comedy of Errors' was written. The three Parts of 'Henry VI.' are the earliest of the historical plays. Those who dispute the genuineness of the First Part affirm that it contains more allusions to mythology and classical authors than Shakspeare ever uses; but, with a most singular inconsistency, in the passages of the Second and Third Parts which they have chosen to pronounce as the additions of Shakspeare to the original plays of another writer or writers, there are to be found as many allusions to mythology and classical writers as in the part which they deny to be his. We have observed upon these passages that they furnish the proof that, as a young writer, he possessed a competent knowledge of the ancient authors, and was not unwilling to display it; "but that, with that wonderful judgment which was as remarkable as the prodigious range of his imaginative powers, he soon learnt to avoid the pedantry to which inferior men so pertinaciously clung in the pride of their scholarship." Ranging over the whole dramatic works of Shakspeare, whenever we find a classical image or allusion, such as in 'Hamlet,'—

"A station like the herald Mercury,
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,"—

the management of the idea is always elegant and graceful; and the passage may sustain a contrast with the most refined imitations of his contemporaries, or of his own imitator, Milton. In his Roman plays he appears co-existent with his wonderful characters, and to have read all the obscure pages of Roman history with a clearer eye than philosopher or historian. When he

employs Latinisms in the construction of his sentences, and even in the creation of new words, he does so with singular facility and unerring correctness. And then, we are to be told, he managed all this by studying bad translations, and by copying extracts from grammars and dictionaries; as if it was reserved for such miracles of talent and industry as the Farmers and the Steevenses to read Ovid and Virgil in their original tongues, whilst the dull Shakspeare, whether schoolboy or adult, was to be contented through life with the miserable translations of Arthur Golding and Thomas Phaer.* We believe that his familiarity at least with the best Roman writers was begun early, and continued late; and that he, of all boys of Stratford, would be the least likely to discredit the teaching of Thomas Hunt and Thomas Jenkins, the masters of the grammar-school from 1572 till 1580.

There were other agencies than the grammar-school at work in the direction of Shakspeare's inquiring boyhood. There are local associations connected with Stratford which could not be without their influence in the formation of his mind. Within the range of such a boy's curiosity were the fine old historic towns of Warwick and Coventry, the sumptuous palace of Kenilworth, the grand monastic remains of Evesham. His own Avon abounded with spots of singular beauty, quiet hamlets, solitary woods. Nor was Stratford shut

* See a series of learned and spirited papers by the late Dr. Maginn on Farmer's 'Essay,' printed in Fraser's Magazine, 1839.

out from the general world, as many country towns are. It was a great highway; and dealers with every variety of merchandise resorted to its fairs. The eyes of Shakspeare must always have been open for observation. When he was twelve years old Elizabeth made her celebrated progress to Lord Leicester's castle of Kenilworth. Was William Shakspeare at Kenilworth in that summer of 1575, when the great Dudley entertained the queen with a splendour which annalists have delighted to record, and upon which one of our own days has bestowed a fame more imperishable than that of any annals? Percy, speaking of the old Coventry Hock-play, says, "Whatever this old play or storial show was at the time it was exhibited to Queen Elizabeth, it had probably our young Shakspeare for a spectator, who was then in his twelfth year, and doubtless attended with all the inhabitants of the surrounding country at these 'princely pleasures of Kenilworth,' whence Stratford is only a few miles distant." The preparations for this celebrated entertainment were on so magnificent a scale, the purveyings must have been so enormous, the posts so unintermitting, that there had needed not the flourishings of paragraphs (for the age of paragraphs was not as yet) to have roused the curiosity of all mid-England. In 1575, when Robert Dudley welcomed his sovereign with a more than regal magnificence, it is easy to believe that his ambition looked for a higher reward than that of continuing a queen's most favoured servant and counsellor. It appears to us that the exquisite speech of Oberon in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' is founded upon a recollection of

what the young Shakspeare heard of the intent of the princely pleasures of Kenilworth, and is associated with some of the poetical devices which he might have there beheld :—

Obe. My gentle Puck, come hither : Thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song ;
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.

Puck. I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw, (but thou couldst not,)
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd ; a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal, throned by the west ;
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts :
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon ;
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free."

The most remarkable of the shows of Kenilworth were associated with the mythology and the romance of lakes and seas. "Triton, in likeness of a mermaid, came towards the Queen's Majesty." "Arion appeared sitting on a dolphin's back." So the quaint and really poetical George Gascoigne, in his 'Brief Rehearsal, or rather a true Copy of as much as was presented before her Majesty at Kenilworth.' But the diffuse and most entertaining coxcomb Laneham describes a song of Arion with an ecstasy which may justify the belief that the "dulcet and harmonious breath" of "the sea-

maid's music" might be the echo of the melodies heard by the young poet as he stood beside the lake at Kenilworth:—"Now, Sir, the ditty in metre so aptly endited to the matter, and after by voice deliciously delivered; the song, by a skilful artist into his parts so sweetly sorted; each part in his instrument so clean and sharply touched; every instrument again in his kind so excellently tunable; and this in the evening of the day, resounding from the calm waters, where the presence of her Majesty, and longing to listen, had utterly damped all noise and din, the whole harmony conveyed in time, tune, and temper thus incomparably melodious; with what pleasure (Master Martin), with what sharpness of conceit, with what lively delight this might pierce into the hearers' hearts, I pray ye imagine yourself, as ye may." If Elizabeth be the "fair vestal throned by the west," of which there can be no reasonable doubt, the most appropriate scene of the mermaid's song would be Kenilworth, and "that very time" the summer of 1575. There were other circumstances connected with his locality which were favourable to the cultivation of the dramatic spirit in the boy-poet. It requires not the imagination of the romance-writer to assume that before William Shakspeare was sixteen, that is, before the year 1580, when the pageants at Coventry, with one or two rare exceptions, were finally suppressed, he would be a spectator of one of these remarkable performances, which were in a few years wholly to perish; becoming, however, the foundations of a drama more suited to the altered spirit of the people, more universal in its range,—the drama of the laity, and not of the church.

The ancient accounts of the Chamberlain of the borough of Stratford exhibit a number of payments made out of the funds of the corporation for theatrical performances. In 1569, when John Shakspeare was chief magistrate, there is a payment of nine shillings to the Queen's players, and of twelve-pence to the Earl of Worcester's players. In 1573 the Earl of Leicester's players received six shillings and eight-pence. In 1574 "my Lord of Warwick's players" have a gratuity of seventeen shillings, and the Earl of Worcester's players of five and seven-pence. In 1577 "my Lord of Leicester's players" receive fifteen shillings, and "my Lord of Worcester's players" three and four-pence. In 1579 and 1580 the entries are more circumstantial:—

"1579. Item paid to my Lord Strange men the xith day of February at the comāundement of Mr. Bayliffe, vs.

P^d at the comāundement of Mr. Baliffe to the Countys of Essex plears, xivs. vid.

1580. P^d to the Earle of Darbyes players at the comāundement of Mr. Baliffe, viils. lvd."

It thus appears that there had been three sets of players at Stratford within a short distance of the time when William Shakspeare was sixteen years of age.

It is a curious circumstance that the most precise and interesting account which we possess of one of the earliest of the theatrical performances is from the recollection of a man who was born in the same year as William Shakspeare. In 1639 R. W. (R. Willis), stating his age to be seventy-five, published a little volume, called 'Mount Tabor,' which contains a pas-

sage, "upon a stage-play which I saw when I was a child," which is essential to be given in any history or sketch of the early stage :

" In the city of Gloucester the manner is (as I think it is in other like corporations) that, when players of interludes come to town, they first attend the mayor, to inform him what nobleman's servants they are, and so to get licence for their public playing ; and if the mayor like the actors, or would show respect to their lord and master, he appoints them to play their first play before himself and the aldermen and common council of the city ; and that is called the mayor's play, where every one that will comes in without money, the mayor giving the players a reward as he thinks fit, to show respect unto them. At such a play my father took me with him, and made me stand between his legs, as he sat upon one of the benches, where we saw and heard very well. The play was called ' The Cradle of Security,' wherein was personated a king or some great prince, with his courtiers of several kinds, amongst which three ladies were in special grace with him, and they, keeping him in delights and pleasures, drew him from his graver counsellors, hearing of sermons, and listening to good counsel and admonitions, that in the end they got him to lie down in a cradle upon the stage, where these three ladies, joining in a sweet song, rocked him asleep, that he snorted again, and in the mean time closely conveyed under the clothes wherewithal he was covered a vizard like a swine's snout upon his face, with three wire chains fastened thereunto, the other end whereof being holden

severally by those three ladies, who fall to singing again, and then discovered his face, that the spectators might see how they had transformed him going on with their singing. Whilst all this was acting, there came forth of another door at the farthest end of the stage two old men, the one in blue, with a sergeant-at-arms his mace on his shoulder, the other in red, with a drawn sword in his hand, and leaning with the other hand upon the other's shoulder, and so they two went along in a soft pace, round about by the skirt of the stage, till at last they came to the cradle, when all the court was in greatest jollity, and then the foremost old man with his mace stroke a fearful blow upon the cradle, whereat all the courtiers, with the three ladies and the vizard, all vanished; and the desolate prince, starting up barefaced, and finding himself thus sent for to judgment, made a lamentable complaint of his miserable case, and so was carried away by wicked spirits. This prince did personate in the moral the wicked of the world; the three ladies, pride, covetousness, and luxury; the two old men, the end of the world and the last judgment. This sight took such impression in me, that when I came towards man's estate it was as fresh in my memory as if I had seen it newly acted."

We now understand why the bailiff of Stratford paid the players out of the public money. The first performance of each company in this town was the bailiff's, or chief magistrate's, play; and thus, when the father of William Shakspeare was bailiff, the boy might have stood "between his legs as he sat upon one of the benches."

The hall of the Guild, which afterwards became the Town Hall, was the occasional theatre of Stratford. It is now a long room, and somewhat low, the building being divided into two floors, the upper of which is used as the Grammar School. The elevation for the Court at one end of the hall would form the stage; and on one side is an ancient separate chamber to which the performers would retire. With a due provision of benches, about three hundred persons could be accommodated in this room; and no doubt Mr. Bailiff would be liberal in the issue of his invitations, so that Stratford might not grudge its expenditure of five shillings.

It would appear from Willis's description that 'The Cradle of Security' was for the most part dumb show. It is probable that he was present at its performance at Gloucester when he was six or seven years of age; it evidently belongs to that class of moral plays which were of the simplest construction. And yet it was popular long after the English drama had reached its highest eminence. When the pageants and mysteries had been put down by the force of public opinion, when spectacles of a dramatic character had ceased to be employed as instruments of religious instruction, the professional players who had sprung up founded their popularity for a long period upon the ancient habits and associations of the people. Our drama was essentially formed by a course of steady progress, and not by rapid transition. We are accustomed to say that the drama was created by Shakspeare, Marlowe, Greene, Kyd, and a few others of distinguished genius; but they all of them worked upon a foundation which was ready for

them. The superstructure of real tragedy and comedy had to be erected upon the moral plays, the romances, the histories, which were beginning to be popular in the very first days of Queen Elizabeth, and continued to be so, even in their very rude forms, beyond the close of her long reign.

The controversy upon the lawfulness of stage-plays was a remarkable feature of the period which we are now noticing; and, as pamphlets were to that age what newspapers are to ours, there can be little doubt that even in the small literary society of Stratford the tracts upon this subject might be well known. The dispute about the Theatre was a contest between the holders of opposite opinions in religion. The Puritans, who even at that time were strong in their zeal if not in their numbers, made the Theatre the especial object of their indignation, for its unquestionable abuses allowed them so to frame their invectives that they might tell with double force against every description of public amusement, against poetry in general, against music, against dancing, associated as they were with the excesses of an ill-regulated stage. A Treatise of John Northbrooke, licensed for the press in 1577, is directed against "dicing, dancing, vain plays, or interludes." Gosson, who had been a student of Christchurch, Oxford, had himself written two or three plays previous to his publication, in 1579, of 'The School of Abuse, containing a Pleasant Invective against Poets, Pipers, Players, Jesters, and such-like Caterpillars of a Commonwealth.' This book, written with considerable ostentation of learning, and indeed with no common vigour and occa-

sional eloquence, defeats its own purposes by too large an aim. Poets, whatever be the character of their poetry, are the objects of Gosson's new-born hostility. The three abuses of the time are held to be inseparable:— "As poetry and piping are cousin-germans, so piping and playing are of great affinity, and all three chained in links of abuse." If the young Shakspeare had his ambition turned towards dramatic poetry when he was sixteen, that ambition was not likely to be damped by Gosson's general declamation.

The earliest, and the most permanent, of poetical associations are those which are impressed upon the mind by localities which have a deep historical interest. It would be difficult to find a district possessing more striking remains of a past time than the neighbourhood in which William Shakspeare spent his youth. The poetical feeling which the battle-fields, and castles, and monastic ruins of mid-England would excite in him, may be reasonably considered to have derived an intensity through the real history of these celebrated spots being vague, and for the most part traditional. The age of local historians had not yet arrived. The monuments of the past were indeed themselves much more fresh and perfect than in the subsequent days, when every tomb inscription was copied, and every mouldering document set forth. But in the year 1580, if William Shakspeare desired to know, for example, with some precision, the history which belonged to those noble towers of Warwick upon which he had often gazed with a delight that scarcely required to be based upon knowledge, he would look in vain for any guide

to his inquiries. Some old people might tell him that they remembered their fathers to have spoken of one John Rous, the son of Geoffrey Rous of Warwick, who, having diligently studied at Oxford, and obtained a reputation for uncommon learning, rejected all ambitious thoughts, shut himself up with his books in the solitude of Guy's Cliff, and was engaged to the last in writing the Chronicles of his country, and especially the history of his native County and its famous Earls: and there, in the quiet of that pleasant place, performing his daily offices of devotion as a chantry priest in the little chapel, did John Rous live a life of happy industry till 1491. But the world in general derived little profit from his labours. Yet if the future Poet sustained some disadvantage by living before the days of antiquarian minuteness, he could still dwell in the past, and people it with the beings of his own imagination. The Chroniclers would, however, afford him ample materials to work into his own topography. There was a truth which was to be found amidst all the mistakes and contradictions of the annalists—the great poetical truth, that the devices of men are insufficient to establish any permanent command over events; that crime would be followed by retribution; that evil passions would become their own tormentors; that injustice could not be successful to the end; that although dimly seen and unwillingly acknowledged, the great presiding power of the world could make evil work for good, and advance the general happiness out of the particular misery. This was the mode, we believe, in which that thoughtful youth read the Chronicles of his

country, whether brief or elaborate. Looking at them by the strong light of local association, there would be local tradition at hand to enforce that universal belief in the justice of God's providence which is in itself alone one of the many proofs of that justice.

Hall, the chronicler, writing his history of 'The Families of Lancaster and York,' about seventy years after the "continual dissension for the crown of this noble realm" was terminated, says,—“What nobleman liveth at this day, or what gentleman of any ancient stock or progeny is clear, whose lineage hath not been infested and plagued with this unnatural division?” During the boyhood of William Shakspeare, it cannot be doubted that he would meet with many a gentleman, and many a yeoman, who would tell him how their forefathers had been thus “infested and plagued.” The traditions of the most stirring events of that contest would at this time be about a century old; generally diluted in their interest by passing through the lips of three or four generations, but occasionally presented vividly to the mind of the inquiring boy in the narration of some amongst the “hoary-headed eld,” whose fathers had fought at Bosworth or Tewksbury. Many of these traditions, too, would be essentially local; extending back even to the period when the banished Duke of Hereford, in his bold march

“From Ravenspurgh to Cotswold,” •

gathered a host of followers in the counties of Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Warwick, and Worcester.

• ‘Richard II.,’ Act 2, scene 3.

Fields, where battles had been fought; towns, where parliaments had assembled, and treaties had been ratified; castles, where the great leaders had stood at bay, or had sallied forth upon the terrified country—such were the objects which the young poet would associate with many an elaborate description of the chroniclers, and many an interesting anecdote of his ancient neighbours. It appears to us that his dramatic power was early directed towards this long and complicated story, by some principle even more exciting than its capabilities for the purposes of the drama. It was the story, we think, which was presented to him in the evening-talk around the hearth of his childhood; it was the story whose written details were most accessible to him, being narrated by Hall with a rare minuteness of picturesque circumstance; but it was a story also of which his own district had been the scene, in many of its most stirring events. Out of ten English Historical Plays which were written by him, and some undoubtedly amongst his first performances, he has devoted eight to circumstances belonging to this memorable story. No other nation ever possessed such a history of the events of a century,—a history in which the agents are not the hard abstractions of warriors and statesmen, but men of flesh and blood like ourselves; men of passion, and crime, and virtue; elevated perhaps by the poetical art, but filled, also through that art, with such a wondrous life, that we dwell amongst them as if they were of our own day, and feel that they must have spoken as he has made them speak, and act as he has made them act. It is in vain that we are told that some events are

omitted, and some transposed; that documentary history does not exhibit its evidence *here*, that a contemporary narrative somewhat militates against the representation *there*. The general truth of this dramatic history cannot be shaken. It is a philosophical history in the very highest sense of that somewhat abused term. It contains the philosophy that can only be produced by the union of the noblest imagination with the most just and temperate judgment. It is the loftiness of the poetical spirit which has enabled Shakspeare alone to write this history with impartiality. Open the chroniclers, and we find the prejudices of the Yorkist or the Lancastrian manifesting the intensity of the old factious hatred. Who can say to which faction Shakspeare belongs? He has comprehended the whole, whilst others knew only a part.

The last play of the series which belongs to the wars of the Roses is unquestionably written altogether with a more matured power than those which preceded it; yet the links which connect it with the other three plays of the series are so unbroken, the treatment of character is so consistent, and the poetical conception of the whole so uniform, that, whatever amount of criticism may be yet in store to show that our view is incorrect, we now confidently speak of them all as the plays of Shakspeare, and of Shakspeare alone. Matured, especially in its wonderful exhibition of character, as the 'Richard III.' is, we cannot doubt that the subject was very early familiar to the young poet's mind. The Battle of Bosworth Field was the great event of his own locality, which for a century had fixed the government of England. The

course of the Reformation, and especially the dissolution of the Monasteries, had produced great social changes, which were in operation at the time in which William Shakspeare was born; whose effects, for good and for evil, he must have seen working around him, as he grew from year to year in knowledge and experience. But those events were too recent, and indeed of too delicate a nature, to assume the poetical aspect in his mind. They abided still in the region of prejudice and controversy. It was dangerous to speak of the great religious divisions of the kingdom with a tolerant impartiality. History could scarcely deal with these opinions in a spirit of justice. Poetry, thus, which has regard to what is permanent and universal, has passed by these matters, important as they are. But the great event which placed the Tudor family on the throne, and gave England a stable government, however occasionally distracted by civil and religious division, was an event which would seize fast upon such a mind as that of William Shakspeare. His ancestor, there can be little doubt, had been an adherent of the Earl of Richmond. For his faithful services to the conqueror at Bosworth he was rewarded, as we are assured, by lands in Warwickshire. That field of Bosworth would therefore have to him a family as well as a local interest. Burton, the historian of Leicestershire, who was born about ten years after William Shakspeare, tells us "that his great-great-grandfather, John Hardwick, of Lindley, near Bosworth, a man of very short stature, but active and courageous, tendered his service to Henry, with some troops of horse, the night he lay at Atherston, became

his guide to the field, advised him in the attack, and how to profit by the sun and by the wind." Burton further says, writing in 1622, that the inhabitants living around the plain called Bosworth Field, more properly the plain of Sutton, "have many occurrences and passages yet fresh in memory, by reason that some persons thereabout, which saw the battle fought, were living within less than forty years, of which persons myself have seen some, and have heard of their disclosures, though related by the second hand." This "living within less than forty years" would take us back to about the period which we are now viewing in relation to the life of Shakspeare. But certainly there is something over-marvellous in Burton's story, to enable us to think that William Shakspeare, even as a very young boy, could have conversed with "some persons thereabout" who had seen a battle fought in 1485. That, as Burton more reasonably of himself says, he might have "heard their discourses at second-hand" is probable enough. Bosworth Field is about thirty miles from Stratford. Burton says that the plain derives its name from Bosworth, "not that this battle was fought at this place (it being fought in a large, flat plain, and spacious ground, three miles distant from this town, between the towns of Shenton, Sutton, Dadlington, and Stoke); but for that this town was the most worthy town of note near adjacent, and was therefore called Bosworth Field. That this battle was fought in this plain appeareth by many remarkable places: By a little mount cast up, where the common report is, that at the first beginning of the battle Henry Earl of Richmond

made his parænetical oration to his army; by divers pieces of armour, weapons, and other warlike accoutrements, and by many arrowheads here found, whereof, about twenty years since, at the enclosure of the lordship of Stoke, great store were digged up, of which some I have now (1622) in my custody, being of a long, large, and big proportion, far greater than any now in use; as also by relation of the inhabitants, who have many occurrences and passages yet fresh in memory." Burton goes on to tell two stories connected with the eventful battle. The one was the vision of King Richard, of "divers fearful ghosts running about him, not suffering him to take any rest, still crying 'Revenge.'" Hall relates the tradition thus:—"The same went that he had the same night a dreadful and a terrible dream, for it seemed to him, being asleep, that he saw divers images like terrible devils, not suffering him to take any quiet or rest." Burton says, previous to his description of the dream, "The vision is *reported* to be in this manner." And certainly his account of the fearful ghosts "still crying Revenge" is essentially different from that of the chronicler. Shakspeare has followed the more poetical account of the old local historian; which, however, could not have been known to him:—

"Methought the souls of all that I have murther'd
Came to my tent; and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard."

Did Shakspeare obtain his notion from the same source as Burton—from "relation of the inhabitants who have many occurrences and passages yet fresh in memory?"

The localities amidst which Shakspeare lived were, as

we have thus seen, highly favourable to his cultivation of a poetical reverence for antiquity. But his unerring observation of the present prevented the past becoming to him an illusion. He had always an earnest patriotism; he had a strong sense of the blessings which had been conferred upon his own day through the security won out of peril and suffering by the middle classes. The destruction of the old institutions, after the first evil effects had been mitigated by the energy of the people, had diffused capital, and had caused it to be employed with more activity. But he, who scarcely ever stops to notice the political aspects of his own day, cannot forbear an indignant comment upon the sufferings of the very poorest, which, if not caused by, were at least coincident with, the great spoliation of the property of the Church. Poor Tom, "who is whipped from tithing to tithing, and stocked, punished, and imprisoned," was no fanciful portrait; he was the creature of the pauper legislation of half a century. Exhortations in the churches, "for the furtherance of the relief of such as were in unfeigned misery," were prescribed by the statute of the 1st of Edward VI.; but the same statute directs that the unhappy wanderer, after certain forms of proving that he has not offered himself for work, shall be marked V with a hot iron upon his breast, and adjudged to be "*a slave*" for two years to him who brings him before justices of the peace; and the statute goes on to direct the slave-owner "to cause the said slave to work by beating, chaining, or otherwise." Three years afterwards the statute is repealed, seeing that it could not be carried into effect by reason

of the multitude of vagabonds and the extremity of their wants. The whipping and the stocking were applied by successive enactments of Elizabeth. The gallows, too, was always at hand to make an end of the wanderers when, hunted from tithing to tithing, they inevitably became thieves. Nothing but a compulsory provision for the maintenance of the poor could then have saved England from a fearful Jacquerie. It cannot reasonably be doubted that the vast destruction of capital by the dissolution of the monasteries threw for many years a quantity of superfluous labour upon the yet unsettled capital of the ordinary industry of the country. That Shakspeare had witnessed much of this misery is evident from his constant disposition to descry "a soul of goodness in things evil," and from his indignant hatred of the heartlessness of petty authority:—

"Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand."

And yet, with many social evils about him, the age of Shakspeare's youth was one in which the people were making a great intellectual progress. The poor were ill provided for. The Church was in an unsettled state, attacked by the natural restlessness of those who looked upon the Reformation with regret and hatred, and by the rigid enemies of its traditionary ceremonies and ancient observances, who had sprung up in its bosom. The promises which had been made that education should be fostered by the State had utterly failed; for even the preservation of the universities, and the protection and establishment of a few grammar-schools, had been unwillingly conceded by the avarice of those

daring statesmen who had swallowed up the riches of the ancient establishment. The genial spirit of the English yeomanry had received a check from the intolerance of the powerful sect who frowned upon all sports and recreations—who despised the arts—who held poets and pipers to be “caterpillars of a commonwealth.” But yet the wonderful stirring up of the intellect of the nation had made it an age favourable for the cultivation of the highest literature; and most favourable to those who looked upon society, as the young Shakspeare must have looked, in the spirit of cordial enjoyment and practical wisdom.

Charlcote:—the name is familiar to every reader of Shakspeare; but it is not presented to the world under the influence of pleasant associations with the world's poet. The story, which was first told by Rowe, must be here repeated:—“An extravagance that he was guilty of forced him both out of his country, and that way of living which he had taken up; and though it seemed at first to be a blemish upon his good manners, and a misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily proved the occasion of exerting one of the greatest geniuses that ever was known in dramatic poetry. He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and, amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlcote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that

ill usage, he made a ballad upon him. And though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London.* The good old gossip Aubrey is wholly silent about the deer-stealing and the flight to London, merely saying, "This William, being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, I guess about eighteen." But there were other antiquarian gossips of Aubrey's age, who have left us their testimony upon this subject. The Reverend William Fulman, a fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who died in 1688, bequeathed his papers to the Reverend Richard Davies of Sandford, Oxfordshire; and on the death of Mr. Davies, in 1707, these papers were deposited in the library of Corpus Christi. Fulman appears to have made some collections for the biography of our English poets, and under the name Shakspeare he gives the dates of his birth and death. But Davies, who added notes to his friend's manuscripts, affords us the following piece of information:—"He was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits; particularly from Sir Lucy, who had him oft whipped, and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native country, to his great advancement. But his revenge was so great, that he is his Justice Clodpate, and calls him a great man, and that, in allusion to his name, bore three

* 'Some Account of the Life of William Shakespear,' written by Mr. Rowe.

louses rampant for his arms." The accuracy of this chronicler, as to events supposed to have happened a hundred years before he wrote, may be inferred from his correctness in what was accessible to him. Justice Clodpate is a new character; and the three louses rampant have diminished strangely from the "dozen white luces" of Master Slender. In Mr. Davies's account we have no mention of the ballad—through which, according to Rowe, the young poet revenged his "ill usage." But Capell, the editor of Shakspeare, found a new testimony to that fact: "The writer of his 'Life,' the first modern, [Rowe] speaks of a 'lost ballad,' which added fuel, he says, to the knight's before-conceived anger, and 'redoubled the prosecution;' and calls the ballad 'the first essay of Shakespeare's poetry: one stanza of it, which has the appearance of genuine, was put into the editor's hands many years ago by an ingenious gentleman (grandson of its preserver), with this account of the way in which it descended to him: Mr. Thomas Jones, who dwelt at Tarbick, a village in Worcestershire, a few miles from Stratford-on-Avon, and died in the year 1703, aged upwards of ninety, remembered to have heard from several old people at Stratford the story of Shakespeare's robbing Sir Thomas Lucy's park; and their account of it agreed with Mr. Rowe's, with this addition—that the ballad written against Sir Thomas by Shakespeare was stuck upon his park-gate, which exasperated the knight to apply to a lawyer at Warwick to proceed against him. Mr. Jones had put down in writing the first stanza of the ballad, which was all he remembered of it, and Mr.

Thomas Wilkes (my grandfather) transmitted it to my father by memory, who also took it in writing." This, then, is the entire evidence as to the deer-stealing tradition. According to Rowe, the young Shakspeare was engaged more than once in robbing a park, for which he was prosecuted by Sir Thomas Lucy; he made a ballad upon his prosecutor, and then, being more severely pursued, fled to London. According to Davies, he was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits; for which he was often whipped, sometimes imprisoned, and at last forced to fly the country. According to Jones, the tradition of Rowe was correct as to robbing the park; and the obnoxious ballad being stuck upon the park-gate, a lawyer of Warwick was authorised to prosecute the offender. The tradition is thus full of contradictions upon the face of it. It necessarily would be so, for each of the witnesses speaks of circumstances that must have happened a hundred years before his time. We must examine the credibility of the tradition therefore by inquiring what was the state of the law as to the offence for which William Shakspeare is said to have been prosecuted; what was the state of public opinion as to the offence; and what was the position of Sir Thomas Lucy as regarded his immediate neighbours.

The law in operation at the period in question was the 5th of Elizabeth, chapter 21. The ancient forest-laws had regard only to the possessions of the Crown; and therefore in the 32nd of Henry VIII. an Act was passed for the protection of "every inheritor and possessor of manors, land, and tenements," which made

the killing of deer, and the taking of rabbits and hawks, felony. This Act was repealed in the 1st of Edward VI.; but it was quickly re-enacted in the 3rd and 4th of Edward VI. (1549 and 1550), it being alleged that unlawful hunting prevailed to such an extent throughout the realm, in the royal and private parks, that in one of the king's parks within a few miles of London five hundred deer were slain in one day. For the due punishment of such offences the taking of deer was again made felony. But the Act was again repealed in the 1st of Mary. In the 5th of Elizabeth it was attempted in Parliament once more to make the offence a capital felony. But this was successfully resisted; and it was enacted that, if any person by night or by day "wrongfully or unlawfully break or enter into any park empaled, or any other several ground closed with wall, pale, or hedge, and used for the keeping, breeding, and cherishing of deer, and so wrongfully hunt, drive, or chase out, or take, kill, or slay any deer within any such empaled park, or closed ground with wall, pale, or other enclosure, and used for deer, as is aforesaid," he shall suffer three months' imprisonment, pay treble damages to the party offended, and find sureties for seven years' good behaviour. But there is a clause in this Act (1562-3) which renders it doubtful whether the penalties for taking deer could be applied twenty years after the passing of the Act, in the case of Sir Thomas Lucy. "Provided always, That this Act, or anything contained therein, extend not to any park or enclosed ground hereafter to be made and used for deer, without the grant or licence of our Sovereign Lady the

Queen, her heirs, successors, or progenitors." At the date of this statute Charlcote, it is said, was not a deer-park; was not an enclosed ground royally licensed. For the space of forty-two years after the passing of this Act of Elizabeth there was no remedy for deer-stealing (except by action for trespass) in grounds not enclosed at the passing of that Act. The statute of the 3rd of James I. recites that for offences within such grounds there is no remedy provided by the Act of Elizabeth, or by any other Act. It appears to us, however, that Malone puts the case against the tradition too strongly when he maintains that Charlcote was not a licensed park in 1562, and that, therefore, its venison continued to be unprotected till the statute of James. The Act of Elizabeth clearly contemplates any "several ground" "closed with wall, pale, or hedge, and used for the keeping of deer;" and as Sir Thomas Lucy built the mansion at Charlcote in 1558, it may reasonably be supposed that at the date of the statute the domain of Charlcote was closed with wall, pale, or hedge. The deer-stealing tradition, however, has grown more minute as it has advanced in age. Charlcote, according to Mr. Samuel Ireland, was not the place of Shakspeare's unlucky adventures. The Park of Fulbrooke, he says, was the property of Sir Thomas Lucy; and he gives us a drawing of an old house where the young offender was conveyed after his detection. Upon the Ordnance Map of our own day is the Deer Barn, where, according to the same veracious tradition, the venison was concealed. A word or two disposes of this part of the tradition: Fulbrooke did not come into the possession

of the Lucy family till the grandson of Sir Thomas purchased it in the reign of James I. We have seen, then, that for ten years previous to the passing of the Act of Elizabeth for the preservation of deer there had been no laws in force except the old forest-laws, which applied not to private property. The statute of Elizabeth makes the bird-nesting boy, who climbs up to the hawk's eyrie, as liable to punishment as the deer-stealer. The taking of rabbits, as well as deer, was felony by the statutes of Henry VIII. and Edward VI.; but from the time of Henry VIII. to James I. there was no protection for rabbits; they were *feræ naturæ*. Our unhappy poet, therefore, could not be held to steal rabbits, however fond he might be of hunting them; and certainly it would have been legally unsafe for Sir Thomas Lucy to have whipped him for such a disposition. Pheasants and partridges were free for men of all condition to shoot with gun or cross-bow, or capture with hawk. There was no restriction against taking hares except a statute of Henry VIII., which, for the protection of hunting, forbade tracking them in the snow. With this general right of sport it is scarcely to be expected that the statute against the taking of deer should be very strictly observed by the bold yeomanry of the days of Elizabeth; or that the offence of a young man should have been visited by such severe prosecution as should have compelled him to fly the country. The penalty for the offence was a defined one. The short imprisonment might have been painful for a youth to bear, but it would not have been held disgraceful. All the writers of the Elizabethan period

speak of killing a deer with a sort of jovial sympathy, worthy the descendants of Robin Hood. "I'll have a buck till I die, I'll slay a doe while I live," is the maxim of the Host in 'The Merry Devil of Edmon-ton;' and even Sir John, the priest, reproves him not: he joins in the fun. With this loose state of public opinion, then, upon the subject of venison, is it likely that Sir Thomas Lucy would have pursued for such an offence the eldest son of an alderman of Stratford with any extraordinary severity? The knight was nearly the most important person residing in the immediate neighbourhood of Stratford. In 1578 he had been High Sheriff. At the period when the deer-stealing may be supposed to have taken place he was seeking to be member for the county of Warwick, for which he was returned in 1584. He was in the habit of friendly intercourse with the residents of Stratford, for in 1583 he was chosen as an arbitrator in a matter of dispute by Hamnet Sadler, the friend of John Shakspeare and of his son. All these considerations tend, we think, to show that the improbable deer-stealing tradition is based, like many other stories connected with Shakspeare, on that vulgar love of the marvellous which is not satisfied with the wonder which a being eminently endowed himself presents, without seeking a contrast of profligacy, or meanness, or ignorance in his early condition, amongst the tales of a rude generation who came after him, and, hearing of his fame, endeavoured to bring him as near as might be to themselves.

Charlcote, then, shall not, at least by us, be sur-

rounded by unpleasant associations in connexion with the name of Shakspeare. It is, perhaps, the most interesting locality connected with that name; for in its great features it is essentially unchanged. There stands, with slight alterations, and those in good taste, the old mansion as it was reared in the days of Elizabeth. A broad avenue leads to its great gateway, which opens into the court and the principal entrance. We would desire to people that hall with kindly inmates; to imagine the fine old knight, perhaps a little too puritanical, indeed, in his latter days, living there in peace and happiness with his family; merry as he ought to have been with his first wife, Jocosia (whose English name, Joyce, soundeth not quite so pleasant), whose epitaph, by her husband, is honourable alike to the deceased and to the survivor. We can picture him planting the second avenue, which leads obliquely across the park from the great gateway to the porch of the parish church. It is an avenue too narrow for carriages, if carriages then had been common; and the knight and his lady walk in stately guise along that grassy pathway, as the Sunday bells summon them to meet their humble neighbours in a place where all are equal. Charlote is full of rich woodland scenery. The lime-tree avenue may, perhaps, be of a later date than the age of Elizabeth; and one elm has evidently succeeded another from century to century. But there are old gnarled oaks and beeches dotted about the park. Its little knolls and valleys are the same as they were two centuries ago. The same Avon flows beneath the gentle elevation on which the house stands, sparkling

in the sunshine as brightly as when that house was first built. There may we still lie .

“Under an oak, whose antique root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood,’

and doubt not that there was the place to which

“A poor sequester’d stag,
That from the hunter’s aim had ta’en a hurt,
Did come to languish.”

There may we still see

“A careless herd,
Full of the pasture,”

leaping gaily along, or crossing the river at their own will in search of fresh fields and low branches whereon to browse. The village of Charlcote is now one of the prettiest of objects. Whatever is new about it—and most of the cottages are new—looks like a restoration of what was old. The same character prevails in the neighbouring village of Hampton Lucy; and it may not be too much to assume that the memory of him who walked in these pleasant places in his younger days, long before the sound of his greatness had gone forth to the ends of the earth, has led to the desire to preserve here something of the architectural character of the age in which he lived.

In the sixteenth century young men married early. In the middle ranks there was little outfit required to begin housekeeping. A few articles of useful furniture satisfied their simple tastes; and we doubt not there was as much happiness seated on the wooden bench as now on the silken ottoman, and as light hearts tripped

over the green rushes as upon the Persian carpet. A silver bowl or two, a few spoons, constituted the display of the more ambitious; but for use the treen platter was at once clean and substantial, though the pewter dish sometimes graced a solemn merry-making. Employment, especially agricultural, was easily obtained by the industrious; and the sons of the yeomen, whose ambition did not drive them into the towns to pursue commerce, or to the universities to try for the prizes of professions, walked humbly and contentedly in the same road as their fathers had walked before them. They tilled a little land with indifferent skill, and their herds and flocks gave food and raiment to their household. Surrounded by the cordial intimacies of the class to which he belonged, it is not difficult to understand how William Shakspeare married early; and the very circumstance of his so marrying is tolerably clear evidence of the course of life in which he was brought up. It has been a sort of fashion of late years to consider that Shakspeare was clerk to an attorney. Thomas Nash in 1589 published this sentence: "It is a common practice now-a-days, among a sort of shifting companions, that run through every art and thrive by none, to leave the trade of *Noverint*, whereto they were born, and busy themselves with the endeavours of art, that could scarcely latinize their neck-verse if they should have need; yet English Seneca, read by candlelight, yields many good sentences, as *Bloud is a Beggar*, and so forth: and, if you entreat him fair in a frosty morning, he will afford you whole *Hamlets*, I should say handfuls, of tragical speeches." This

quotation is held to furnish the external evidence that Shakspeare had been an attorney, by the connexion here implied of "the trade of Noverint" and "whole Hamlets." Noverint was the technical beginning of a bond. It is imputed, then, by Nash, to a sort of shifting companions, that, running through every art and thriving by none, they attempt dramatic composition, drawing their tragical speeches from English Seneca. Does this description apply to Shakspeare? Was he thriving by no art? In 1589 he was established in life as a sharer in the Blackfriars Theatre. Does the use of the term "whole Hamlets" fix the allusion upon him? It appears to us only to show that some tragedy called 'Hamlet,' it may be Shakspeare's, was then in existence; and that it was a play also at which Nash might sneer as abounding with tragical speeches. But it does not seem to us that there is any absolute connexion between the Noverint and the Hamlet. The external evidence of this passage (and it is the only evidence of such a character that has been found) wholly fails, we think, in showing that Shakspeare was in 1589 reputed to have been an attorney. But had he pursued this occupation, either at Stratford or in London, it is tolerably clear that there would have been ample external evidence for the establishment of the fact. In those times an attorney was employed in almost every transaction between man and man, of any importance. Deeds, bonds, indentures, were much more common when legal documents were untaxed, and legal assistance was comparatively cheap. To every document attesting witnesses were numerous; and the attorney's clerk, as

a matter of course, was amongst the number. Such papers and parchments are better secured against the ravages of time than any other manuscripts. It is scarcely possible that, if Shakspeare had been an attorney's clerk, his name would not have appeared in some such document, as a subscribing witness.* No such signature has ever been found. This fact appears to us to dispose of Malone's confident belief that upon Shakspeare leaving school he was placed for two or three years in the office of one of the seven attorneys who practised in the Court of Record in Stratford. Malone adds, "The comprehensive mind of our poet, it must be owned, embraced almost every object of nature, every trade, and every art, the manners of every description of men, and the general language of almost every profession: but his knowledge and application of legal terms seem to me not merely such as might have been acquired by the casual observation of his all-comprehending mind; it has the appearance of technical skill; and he is so fond of displaying it on all occasions, that there is, I think, some ground for supposing that he was early initiated in at least the forms of law." Malone then cites a number of passages exemplifying Shakspeare's knowledge and application of legal terms. The theory was originally propounded

* Mr. Wheler, of Stratford, having taken up the opinion many years ago, upon the suggestion of Malone, that Shakspeare might have been in an attorney's office, has availed himself of his opportunities as a solicitor to examine hundreds of documents of Shakspeare's time, in the hope of discovering his signature. The examination was altogether fruitless.

by Malone in his edition of 1790; and it gave rise to many subsequent notes of the commentators, pointing out these technical allusions. The frequency of their occurrence, and the accuracy of their use, are, however, no proof to us that Shakspeare was professionally a lawyer. There is every reason to believe that the principles of law, especially the law of real property, were much more generally understood in those days than in our own. Educated men, especially those who possessed property, looked upon law as a science instead of a mystery; and its terms were used in familiar speech instead of being regarded as a technical jargon. When Hamlet says, "This fellow might be in his time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries," he employs terms with which every gentleman was familiar, because the owner of property was often engaged in a practical acquaintance with them. This general knowledge, which it would be very remarkable if Shakspeare had not acquired, involves the use of the familiar law-terms of his day, *fee simple*, *fine* and *recovery*, *entail*, *remainder*, *escheat*, *mortgage*. The commonest *practice* of the law, such as a sharp boy would have learnt in two or three casual attendances upon the Bailiff's Court at Stratford, would have familiarized Shakspeare very early with the words which are held to imply considerable technical knowledge—*action*, *bond*, *warrant*, *bill*, *suit*, *plea*, *arrest*. It must not be forgotten that the terms of law, however they may be technically applied, belong to the habitual commerce of mankind; they are no abstract terms,

but essentially deal with human acts, and interests, and thoughts: and it is thus that, without any fanciful analogies, they more readily express the feelings of those who use them with a general significancy, than any other words that the poet could apply.

We hold, then, that William Shakspeare, the son of a possessor and cultivator of land, a gentleman by descent, married to the heiress of a good family, comfortable in his worldly circumstances, married very early the daughter of one in a similar rank of life, and in all probability did not quit his native place when he so married. The marriage-bond, which was discovered a few years since, has set at rest all doubt as to the name and residence of his wife. She is there described as Anne Hathway, of Stratford, in the diocese of Worcester, maiden. Rowe, in his 'Life,' says—"Upon his leaving school he seems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to him; and in order to settle in the world, after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young. His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford." At the hamlet of Shottery, which is in the parish of Stratford, the Hathaways had been settled forty years before the period of Shakspeare's marriage; for in the Warwickshire Surveys, in the time of Philip and Mary, it is recited that John Hathaway held property at Shottery, by copy of court-roll, dated 20th of April, 34th of Henry VIII. (1543).*

* The Shottery property, which was called Hewland, remained with the descendants of the Hathaways till 1838.

time was named Richard; and the intimacy between him and John Shakspeare is shown by a precept in an action against Richard Hathaway, dated 1576, in which John Shakspeare is his bondman. Before the discovery of the marriage-bond Malone had found a confirmation of the traditional account that the maiden name of Shakspeare's wife was Hathaway; for Lady Barnard, the grand-daughter of Shakspeare, makes bequests in her will to the children of Thomas Hathaway, "her kinsman." But Malone doubts whether there were not other Hathaways than those of Shottery, residents in the town of Stratford, and not in the hamlet included in the parish. This is possible. But, on the other hand, the description in the marriage-bond of Anne Hathaway, as of Stratford, is no proof that she was not of Shottery; for such a document would necessarily have regard only to the parish of the person described. Tradition, always valuable when it is not opposed to evidence, has associated for many years the cottage of the Hathaways at Shottery with the wife of Shakspeare. Garrick purchased relics out of it at the time of the Stratford Jubilee; Samuel Ireland afterwards carried off what was called Shakspeare's courting-chair; and there is still in the house a very ancient carved bedstead, which has been handed down from descendant to descendant as an heirloom. The house was no doubt once adequate to form a comfortable residence for a substantial and even wealthy yeoman. It is still a pretty cottage, embosomed by trees, and surrounded by pleasant pastures; and here the young poet might have surrendered his prudence to his affections:—

“As in the sweetest buds
The eating canker dwells, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all.”

The very early marriage of the young man, with one more than seven years his elder, has been supposed to have been a rash and passionate proceeding. Upon the face of it, it appears an act that might at least be reproved in the words which follow those we have just quoted:—

“As the most forward bud
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turn'd to folly; blasting in the bud,
Losing his verdure even in the prime,
And all the fair effects of future hopes.”

This is the common consequence of precocious marriages; but we are not therefore to conclude that “the young and tender wit” of our Shakspeare was “turned to folly”—that his “forward bud” was “eaten by the canker”—that “his verdure” was lost “even in the prime,” by his marriage with Anne Hathaway before he was nineteen. The influence which this marriage must have had upon his destinies was no doubt considerable; but it is too much to assume, as it has been assumed, that it was an unhappy influence. All that we *really* know of Shakspeare’s family life warrants the contrary supposition. We believe that the marriage of Shakspeare was one of affection; that there was no disparity in the worldly condition of himself and the object of his choice; that it was with the consent of friends; that there were no circumstances connected with it which indicate that it was either forced or clandestine,

or urged on by an artful woman to cover her apprehended loss of character.

There is every reason to believe that Shakspeare was remarkable for manly beauty :—" He was a handsome, well-shaped man," says Aubrey. According to tradition, he played Adam in 'As You Like It,' and the Ghost in 'Hamlet.' Adam says,—

"Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty."

Upon his personation of the Ghost, Mr. Campbell has the following judicious remarks :—" It has been alleged, in proof of his mediocrity, that he enacted the part of his own Ghost, in 'Hamlet.' But is the Ghost in 'Hamlet' a very mean character? No; though its movements are few, they must be awfully graceful; and the spectral voice, though subdued and half-monotonous, must be solemn and full of feeling. It gives us an imposing idea of Shakspeare's stature and mien to conceive him in this part. The English public, accustomed to see their lofty nobles, their Essexes, and their Raleighs, clad in complete armour, and moving under it with a majestic air, would not have tolerated the actor Shakspeare, unless he had presented an appearance worthy of the buried majesty of Denmark." That he performed *kingly* parts is indicated by these lines, written, in 1611, by John Davies, in a poem inscribed 'To our English Terence, Mr. William Shakespeare :'

"Some say, good Will, which I in sport do sing,
Hadst thou not play'd some *kingly parts* in sport,
Thou hadst been a companion for a king,
And been a king among the meaner sort."

The portrait by Martin Droeshout, prefixed to the edi-

tion of 1623, when Shakspeare would be well remembered by his friends, gives a notion of a man of remarkably fine features, independent of the wonderful development of forehead. The lines accompanying it, which bear the signature B. I. (most likely Ben Jonson), attest the accuracy of the likeness. The Bust at Stratford bears the same character. The sculptor was Gerard Johnson. It was probably erected soon after the poet's death; for it is mentioned by Leonard Digges, in his verses upon the publication of Shakspeare's collected works by his "pious fellows." All the circumstances of which we have any knowledge imply that Shakspeare, at the time of his marriage, was such a person as might well have won the heart of a mistress whom tradition has described as eminently beautiful. Anne Hathaway at this time was of mature beauty. The inscription over her grave in the church of Stratford-upon-Avon states that she died on "the 6th day of August, 1623, being of the age of 67 years." In November 1582, therefore, she would be of the age of twenty-six. This disparity of years between Shakspeare and his wife has been, we think, somewhat too much dwelt upon. Malone holds that "such a disproportion of age seldom fails at a subsequent period of life to be productive of unhappiness." Malone had, no doubt, in his mind the belief that Shakspeare left his wife wholly dependent upon her children,—a belief of which we were the first to show the utter groundlessness.* He suggests that in the 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' this disproportion is

* See Postscript to 'Twelfth Night,' Pictorial Edition, proving that Shakspeare's widow was provided for by dower.

alluded to, and he quotes a speech of Lysander in Act 1. Scene 1. of that play, not however giving the comment of Hermia upon it. The lines in the original stand thus:—

“*Lys.* Ah me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth:
But either it was different in blood;—

Her. O cross! too high to be enthralled to low!

Lys. Or else misgraffed, in respect of years;—

Her. O spite! too old to be engaged to young!

Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends;—

Her. O hell! to choose love by another's eye!

Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it.”

Difference in blood, disparity of years, the choosing of friends, are opposed to sympathy in choice. But was Shakspeare's own case such as he would bear in mind in making Hermia exclaim, “O spite! too old to be engaged to young!”? The passage was in all probability written about ten years after his marriage, when his wife would still be in the prime of womanhood. When Mr. de Quincey,* therefore, connects the saying of Parson Evans with Shakspeare's early love,—“I like not when a woman has a great peard,”—he scarcely does justice to his own powers of observation and his book-experience. The history of the most imaginative minds, probably of most men of great ability, would show that in the first loves, and in the early marriages, of this class, the choice has generally fallen upon women older than themselves, and this without any reference to inte-

* Life of Shakspeare, in the ‘Encyclopædia Britannica.’

rested motives. But Mr. de Quincey holds that Shakspeare, "looking back on this part of his youthful history from his maturest years, breathes forth pathetic counsels against the errors into which his own inexperience had been ensnared. The disparity of years between himself and his wife he notices in a beautiful scene of the 'Twelfth Night'." In this scene Viola, disguised as a page, a very boy, one of whom it is said—

"For they shall yet belie thy happy years
That say thou art a man,"—

is pressed by the Duke to own that his eye "hath stay'd upon some favour." Viola, who is enamoured of the Duke, punningly replies,—*"A little, by your favour;"* and being still pressed to describe the "kind of woman," she says, of the Duke's "complexion" and the Duke's "years." Any one who in the stage representation of the Duke should do otherwise than make him a grave man of thirty-five or forty, a staid and dignified man, would not present Shakspeare's whole conception of the character. There would be a difference of twenty years between him and Viola. No wonder, then, that the poet should make the Duke dramatically exclaim,—

*"Too old, by Heaven! Let still the woman take
An elder than herself; so wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart."*

And wherefore?—

*"For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
Than women's are."*

The pathetic counsels, therefore, which Shakspeare is here supposed to breathe in his maturer years, have

reference only to his own giddy and unfirm fancies. We are of opinion that, upon the general principle upon which Shakspeare subjects his conception of what is individually true to what is universally true, he would have rejected instead of adopted whatever was peculiar in his own experience, if it had been emphatically recommended to his adoption through the medium of his self-consciousness. Shakspeare wrote these lines at a time of life (about 1602) when a slight disparity of years between himself and his wife would have been a very poor apology to his own conscience that his affection could not hold the bent; and it certainly does happen, as a singular contradiction to his supposed "earnestness in pressing the point as to the *inverted* disparity of years, which indicates pretty clearly an appeal to the lessons of his personal experience," * that at this precise period he should have retired from his constant attendance upon the stage, purchasing land in his native place, and thus seeking in all probability the more constant companionship of that object of his early choice of whom he is thus supposed to have expressed his distaste. It appears to us that this is a tolerably convincing proof that his affections could hold the bent, however he might dramatically and poetically have said,—

"Then let thy love be younger than thyself,
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent :
For women are as roses ; whose fair flower,
Being once display'd, doth fall that very hour."

The marriage-bond of Shakspeare, which may be seen in the Consistorial Court of Worcester, was first pub-

* 'Encyclopædia Britannica.

lished by Mr. Wheler in 1836, having been previously discovered by Sir R. Phillips. It consists of a bond to the officers of the Ecclesiastical Court, in which Fulk Sandells, of the county of Warwick, farmer, and John Rychardson, of the same place, farmer, are bound in the sum of forty pounds, &c. It is dated the 28th day of November, in the 25th year of Elizabeth (1582). The date of this marriage-bond, and the date of the birth of Shakspeare's first child, have led to the belief that the marriage was forced upon a very young man by the friends of a woman whom he had injured. We believe that this is one of the cases in which we may fall into error by attempting to decide without knowing *all* the facts. We hold that the licence for matrimony, obtained from the Consistorial Court at Worcester, was a permission sought for under no extraordinary circumstances;—still less that the young man who was about to marry was compelled to urge on the marriage as a consequence of previous imprudence. We believe, on the contrary, that the course pursued was strictly in accordance with the customs of the time, and of the class to which Shakspeare belonged. The espousals before witnesses, we have no doubt, were then considered as constituting a valid marriage, if followed up within a limited time by the marriage of the Church; and these espousals might have taken place in Shakspeare's case, as in very many of the marriages of the middle classes of his time. However the Reformed Church might have endeavoured to abrogate this practice, it was unquestionably the ancient habit of the people. It was derived from the Roman law, the foundation of many

of our institutions. It prevailed for a long period without offence. It still prevails in the Lutheran Church. We are not to judge of the customs of those days by our own, especially if our inferences have the effect of imputing criminality where the most perfect innocence may have existed.

The course of Shakspeare's life for a year or so after his marriage cannot be followed with any accuracy. Aubrey says, "This William, being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, I guess about eighteen, and was an actor at one of the playhouses, and did act exceedingly well. Now Ben Jonson was never a good actor, but an excellent instructor. He began early to make Essays at Dramatic Poetry, which at that time was very low, and his plays took well." Thus writes honest Aubrey, in the year 1680, in his 'Minutes of Lives,' addressed to his "worthy friend, Mr. Anthony à Wood, Antiquary of Oxford." Of the value of Aubrey's evidence we may form some opinion from his own statement to his friend:—"T is a task that I never thought to have undertaken till you imposed it upon me, saying that I was fit for it by reason of my general acquaintance, having now not only lived above half a century of years in the world, but have also been much tumbled up and down in it; which hath made me so well known. Besides the modern advantage of coffeehouses in this great city, before which men knew not how to be acquainted but with their own relations or societies, I might add that I come of a longævous race, by which means I have wiped some feathers off the wings of time for several

generations, which does reach high." It must not be forgotten that Aubrey's account of Shakspeare, brief and imperfect as it is, is the earliest known to exist. His story of Shakspeare's coming to London is a simple and natural one, without a single marvellous circumstance about it:—"This William, being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London." This, the elder story, appears to us to have much greater verisimilitude than Rowe's, the later:—"He was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London." Aubrey, who has picked up all the gossip "of coffeehouses in this great city," hears no word of Rowe's story, which would certainly have been handed down amongst the traditions of the theatre to Davenant and Shadwell, from whom he does hear something:—"I have heard Sir William Davenant and Mr. Thomas Shadwell (who is counted the best comedian we have now) say, that he had a most prodigious wit." Neither does he say, nor indeed any one else till two centuries and a quarter after Shakspeare is dead, that, "after four years' conjugal discord, he would resolve upon that plan of solitary emigration to the metropolis, which, at the same time that it released him from the humiliation of domestic feuds, succeeded so splendidly for his worldly prosperity, and with a train of circumstances so vast for all future ages." * It is certainly a singular vocation for a writer of genius to bury the legendary scandals of the days of Rowe, for the sake of exhuming a new scandal, which cannot be received at all without the

Encyclopædia Britannica.

belief that the circumstance must have had a permanent and most evil influence upon the mind of the unhappy man who thus cowardly and ignominiously is held to have severed himself from his duty as a husband and a father. We cannot trace the evil influence, and therefore we reject the scandal. It has not even the slightest support from the weakest tradition. It is founded upon an imperfect comparison of two documents, judging of the habits of that period by those of our own day; supported by quotations from a dramatist of whom it would be difficult to affirm that he ever wrote a line which had strict reference to his own feelings and circumstances.

In the baptismal register of the parish of Stratford for 1583 is the entry of the baptism of Susanna on the 26th May. This record necessarily implies the residence of the wife of William Shakspeare in the parish of Stratford. Did he himself continue to reside in this parish? There is no evidence of his residence. His name appears in no suit in the Bailiff's Court at this period. He fills no municipal office, such as his father had filled before him. But his wife continues to reside in the native place of her husband, surrounded by his relations and her own. His father and his mother no doubt watch with anxious solicitude over the fortunes of their first son. He has a brother, Gilbert, seventeen years of age, and a sister of fourteen. His brother Richard is nine years of age; but Edmund is young enough to be the playmate of his little Susanna. On the 2nd February, 1585, there is another entry in the parochial register, of the baptism of Hamnet and

Judith, son and daughter to William Shakspeare. While he is yet a minor he is the father of three children. The circumstance of his minority may perhaps account for the absence of his name from all records of court-leet, or bailiff's court, or common-hall. He was neither a constable, nor an ale-conner, nor an overseer, nor a jury-man, because he was a minor. We cannot affirm that he did not leave Stratford before his minority expired; but it is to be inferred that, if he had continued to reside at Stratford after he was legally of age, we should have found traces of his residence in the records of the town. If his residence was out of the borough, as we have supposed his father's to have been at this period, some trace would yet have been found of him, in all likelihood, within the parish. Just before the termination of his minority we have an undeniable record that he was a second time a father within the parish. It is at this period, then, that we would place his removal from Stratford; his flight, according to the old legend; his solitary emigration, according to the new discovery. That his emigration was even solitary we have not a tittle of evidence. Rowe says that, after having settled in the world in a family manner, and continued in this kind of settlement for some time, the extravagance of which he was guilty in robbing Sir Thomas Lucy's park obliged him to leave his business and family. He could not have so left, even according to the circumstances which were known to Rowe, till after the birth of his son and daughter in 1585. But the story goes on:—"It is at this time, and upon this accident, that he is said to

have made his first acquaintance in the playhouse. He was received into the company then in being, at first in a very mean rank; but his admirable wit, and the natural turn of it to the stage, soon distinguished him, if not as an extraordinary actor, yet as an excellent writer." Sixty years after the time of Rowe the story assumed a more circumstantial shape, as far as regards the *mean rank* which Shakspeare filled in his early connexion with the theatre. Dr. Johnson adds one passage to the 'Life,' which he says "Mr. Pope related, as communicated to him by Mr. Rowe." It is so remarkable an anecdote that it is somewhat surprising that Rowe did not himself add it to his own meagre account:—

"In the time of Elizabeth, coaches being yet uncommon, and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horseback to the play; and when Shakspeare fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the playhouse, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that in a short time every man as he alighted called for Will Shakspeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while Will Shakspeare could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune. Shakspeare, finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when Will Shakspeare was summoned, were immediately to

present themselves—"I am Shakspeare's boy, Sir." In time, Shakspeare found higher employment; but as long as the practice of riding to the playhouse continued, the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of Shakspeare's boys."

Steevens has attempted to impugn the credibility of this anecdote by saying,—“That it was once the general custom to ride on horseback to the play I am yet to learn. The most popular of the theatres were on the Bankside; and we are told by the satirical pamphleteers of that time that the usual mode of conveyance to these places of amusement was by water, but not a single writer so much as hints at the custom of riding to them, or at the practice of having horses held during the hours of exhibition.” Steevens is here in error; he has a vague notion—which is still persevered in with singular obstinacy, even by those who have now the means of knowing that Shakspeare had acquired property in the chief theatre in 1589—that the great dramatic poet had felt no inspiration till he was about eight-and-twenty, and that, therefore, his connexion with the theatre began in the palmy days of the Globe on the Bankside—a theatre not built till 1593. To the earlier theatres, if they were frequented by the gallants of the Court, they would have gone on horses. They did so go, as we learn from Dekker, long after the Bankside theatres were established. The story first appeared in a book entitled ‘The Lives of the Poets,’ considered to be the work of Theophilus Cibber, but said to be written by a Scotchman of the name of Shiels, who was an amanuensis of Dr. Johnson. Shiels

had certainly some hand in the book ; and there we find that Davenant told the anecdote to Betterton, who communicated it to Rowe, who told it to Pope, who told it to Dr. Newton. Improbable as the story is as it now stands, there may be a scintillation of truth in it, as in most traditions. It is by no means impossible that the Blackfriars Theatre might have had Shakspeare's boys to hold horses, but not Shakspeare himself. As a proprietor of the theatre, Shakspeare might sagaciously perceive that its interest would be promoted by the readiest accommodation being offered to its visitors ; and further, with that worldly adroitness which, in him, was not incompatible with the exercise of the highest genius, he might have derived an individual profit by employing servants to perform this office. In an age when horse-stealing was one of the commonest occurrences, it would be a guarantee for the safe charge of the horses that they were committed to the care of the agents of one then well known in the world,—an actor, a writer, a proprietor of the theatre. Such an association with the author of 'Hamlet' must sound most anti-poetical ; but the fact is scarcely less prosaic than that the same wondrous man, about the period when he wrote 'Macbeth,' had an action for debt in the Bailiff's Court at Stratford, to recover thirty-five shillings and tenpence for corn by him sold and delivered.

Familiar, then, with theatrical exhibitions, such as they were, from his earliest youth, and with a genius so essentially dramatic that all other writers that the world has seen have never approached him in his power of going out of himself, it is inconsistent with proba-

bility that he should not have attempted some dramatic composition at an early age. The theory that he was first employed in repairing the plays of others we hold to be altogether untenable; supported only by a very narrow view of the great essentials to a dramatic work, and by verbal criticism, which, when carefully examined, utterly fails even in its own petty assumptions.* There can be no doubt that the three Parts of 'Henry VI.' belong to the early stage. We believe them to be wholly and absolutely the early work of Shakspeare. But we do not necessarily hold that they were his earliest work; for the proof is so clear of the continual improvements and elaborations which he made in his best productions, that it would be difficult to say that some of the plays which have the most finished air, but of which there were no early editions, may not be founded upon very youthful compositions. Others may have wholly perished; thrown aside after a season; never printed; and neglected by their author, to whom new inventions would be easier than remodellings of pieces probably composed upon a false theory of art. For it is too much to imagine that his first productions would be wholly untainted by the taste of the period. Some might have been weak delineations of life and character, overloaded with mythological conceits and pastoral affectations, like the plays of Lyly, which were the Court fashion before 1590. Others might have been prompted by the false ambition to produce effect, which is the characteristic of 'Lo-

See our 'Essay on the Three Parts of Henry VI., and Richard III.,' in the Pictorial and Library editions.

crine,' and partially so of 'Titus Andronicus.' But of one thing we may be sure—that there would be no want of power even in his first productions; that real poetry would have gushed out of the bombast, and true wit sparkled amidst the conceits. His first plays would, we think, fall in with the prevailing desire of the people to learn the history of their country through the stage. If so, they would certainly not exhibit the feebleness of some of those performances which were popular about the period of which we are now speaking, and which continued to be popular even after he had most successfully undertaken

“To raise our ancient sovereigns from their hearse.”

The door of the theatre was not a difficult one for him to enter. It is a singular fact, that several of the most eminent actors of this very period are held to have been his immediate neighbours. We see no difficulty in believing that the first step taken by him in a decision as interesting to ages unborn as important to himself, was the experimental one of rendering his personal aid towards the proper performance of his first acted play. We inverse the usual belief in this matter. We think that Shakspeare became an actor because he was a dramatic writer, and not a dramatic writer because he was an actor. He very quickly made his way to wealth and reputation, not so much by a handsome person and pleasing manners, as by that genius which left all other competitors far behind him in the race of dramatic composition; and by that prudence which taught him to combine the exercise of his extraordinary powers with a constant reference to the course of life he had

chosen, not lowering his art for the advancement of his fortune, but achieving his fortune in showing what mighty things might be accomplished by his art.

Amongst those innumerable by-ways in London which are familiar to the hurried pedestrian, there is a well-known line of streets, or rather lanes, leading from the hill on which St. Paul's stands to the great thoroughfare of Blackfriars Bridge. Between Apothecaries' Hall and Printing-house Square is a short lane, leading into an open space called Playhouse Yard. It is one of those shabby places of which so many in London lie close to the glittering thoroughfares; but which are known only to their own inhabitants, and have at all times an air of quiet which seems like desolation. The houses of this little square, or yard, are neither ancient nor modern. Some of them were probably built soon after the great fire of London; for a few present their gable fronts to the streets, and the wide casements of others have evidently been filled up and modern sashes inserted. But there is nothing here, nor indeed in the whole precinct, with the exception of the few yards of ancient wall, that has any pretension to belong to what may be called the antiquities of London. In the heart of this precinct, close by the church of a suppressed monastery, surrounded by the new houses of the nobility, in the very spot which is now known as Playhouse Yard, was built, in 1575, the Blackfriars Theatre.

The history of the early stage, as it is to be deduced from statutes, and proclamations, and orders of council, exhibits a constant succession of conflicts between the

civic authorities and the performers of plays. The act of the 14th of Elizabeth, "for the punishment of vagabonds, and for relief of the poor and impotent," was essentially an act of protection for the established companies of players. We have here, for the first time, a definition of rogues and vagabonds; and it includes not only those who can "give no reckoning how he or she doth lawfully get his or her living," but "all fencers, bearwards, common players in interludes, and minstrels, not belonging to any baron of this realm, or towards any other honourable personage of greater degree; all jugglers, pedlers, tinkers, and petty chapmen; which said fencers, bearwards, common players in interludes, minstrels, jugglers, pedlers, tinkers, and petty chapmen, shall wander abroad, and have not licence of two justices of the peace at the least, whereof one to be of the quorum, where and in what shire they shall happen to wander." The circumstance of belonging to any baron, or person of greater degree, was in itself a pretty large exception; and if in those times of rising puritanism the licence of two justices of the peace was not always to be procured, the large number of companies enrolled as the servants of the nobility offers sufficient evidence that the profession of a player was not a persecuted one, but one expressly sanctioned by the ruling powers. There was one company of players, the Earl of Leicester's, which, within two years after the legislative protection of this act, received a more important privilege from the Queen herself. In 1574 a writ of privy seal was issued to the keeper of the great seal, commanding him to set forth letters patent addressed to

all justices, &c., licensing and authorizing James Burbage, and four other persons, servants to the Earl of Leicester, "to use, exercise, and occupy the art and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, interludes, stage-plays, and such other like as they have already used and studied, or hereafter shall use and study, as well for the recreation of our loving subjects, as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall think good to see them." And they were to exhibit their performances "as well within our City of London and liberties of the same," as "throughout our realm of England." Without knowing how far the servants of the Earl of Leicester might have been molested by the authorities of the City of London, in defiance of this patent, it is clear that the patent was of itself insufficient to insure their kind reception within the city; for it appears that, within three months after the date of the patent, a letter was written from the Privy Council to the Lord Mayor, directing him "to admit the comedy-players within the city of London, and to be otherwise favourably used." This mandate was probably obeyed; but in 1575 the Court of Common Council, without any exception for the objects of the patent of 1574, made certain orders, in the city language termed an act, which assumed that the whole authority for the regulation of plays was in the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen; that they only could license theatrical exhibitions within the city; and that the players whom they did license should contribute half their receipts to charitable purposes. The civic authorities appear to have stretched their power somewhat too far; for in that very year James Burbage,

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and the other servants of the Earl of Leicester, erected their theatre amidst the houses of the great in the Blackfriars, within a stone's throw of the city walls, but absolutely out of the control of the city officers. The immediate neighbours of the players were the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Hunsdon, as we learn from a petition against the players from the inhabitants of the precinct. The petition was unavailing. The rooms which it states "one Burbadge hath lately bought" were converted "into a common playhouse;" and within fourteen years from the period of its erection William Shakspeare was one of its proprietors.

The royal patent of 1574 authorized in the exercise of their art and faculty "James Burbadge, John Perkyn, John Lanham, William Johnson, and Robert Wilson," who are described as the servants of the Earl of Leicester. Although on the early stage the characters were frequently doubled, we can scarcely imagine that these five persons were of themselves sufficient to form a company of comedians. They had, no doubt, subordinate actors in their pay; they being the proprietors or shareholders in the general adventure. Of these five original patentees four remained as the "sharers in the Blackfriars Playhouse" in 1589, the name only of John Perkyn being absent from the subscribers to a certificate to the Privy Council that the company acting at the Blackfriars "have never given cause of displeasure in that they have brought into their plays matters of state and religion." This certificate—which bears the date of November, 1589—exhibits to us the list of the professional companions of Shakspeare in an early stage of his

career, though certainly not in the very earliest. The certificate describes the persons subscribing it as "her Majesty's poor players," and sets forth that they are "all of them sharers in the Blackfriars Playhouse." Their names are presented in the following order:—1. James Burbadge. 2. Richard Burbadge. 3. John Laneham. 4. Thomas Greene. 5. Robert Wilson. 6. John Taylor. 7. Anth. Wadeson. 8. Thomas Pope. 9. George Peele. 10. Augustine Phillipps. 11. Nicholas Towley. 12. William Shakespeare. 13. William Kempe. 14. William Johnson. 15. Baptiste Goodale. 16. Robert Armyn.

It would not be an easy matter, without some knowledge of minute facts and a considerable effort of imagination, to form an accurate notion of that building in the Blackfriars—rooms converted into a common playhouse—in which we may conclude that the first plays of Shakspeare were exhibited. The very expression used by the petitioners against Burbage's project would imply that the building was not very nicely adapted to the purposes of dramatic representation. They say, "which rooms the said Burbage is now altering, and meaneth very shortly to convert and turn the same into a common playhouse." And yet we are not to infer that the rooms were hastily adapted to their object by the aid of a few boards and drapery, like the barn of a strolling company. In 1596 the shareholders say, in a petition to the Privy Council, that the theatre, "by reason of its having been so long built, hath fallen into great decay, and that, besides the reparation thereof, it has been found necessary to

make the same more convenient for the entertainment of auditories coming thereto." The structure, no doubt, was adapted to its object without any very great regard to durability; and the accommodations, both for actors and audience, were of a somewhat rude nature. The Blackfriars was a winter theatre; so that, differing from the Globe, which belonged to the same company, it was, there can be little doubt, roofed in. It appears surprising that, in a climate like that of England, even a summer theatre should be without a roof; but the surprise is lessened when we consider that, when the Globe was built, in 1591, not twenty years had elapsed since plays were commonly represented in the open yards of the inns of London. The Belle Savage was amongst the most famous of these inn-yard theatres; and even the present area of that inn will show how readily it might be adapted for such performances. The Blackfriars theatre was probably little more than a large space, arranged pretty much like the Belle Savage yard, but with a roof over it. Indeed, so completely were the public theatres adapted after the model of the temporary ones, that the space for the "groundlings" long continued to be called the yard. One of the earliest theatres, built probably about the same time as the Blackfriars, was called the Curtain, from which we may infer that the refinement of separating the actors from the audience during the intervals of the representation was at first peculiar to that theatre.

In the continuation of Stow's 'Chronicle,' by Edmund Howes, there is a very curious passage, which carries us back from the period in which he was writing

(1631) for sixty years. He describes the destruction of the Globe by fire in 1613, the burning of the Fortune Playhouse four years after, the rebuilding of both theatres, and the erection of "a new fair playhouse near the Whitefriars." He then adds,—“And this is the seventeenth stage, or common playhouse, which hath been new made within the space of threescore years within London and the suburbs, viz.: five inns, or common hostelries, turned to playhouses, one Cockpit, St. Paul's singing-school, one in the Blackfriars, and one in the Whitefriars, which was built last of all, in the year one thousand six hundred twenty-nine. All the rest not named were erected only for common playhouses, besides the new-built Bear-garden, which was built as well for plays, and fencers' prizes, as bull-baiting; besides one in former time at Newington Butts. Before the space of threescore years abovesaid I neither knew, heard, nor read of any such theatres, set stages, or playhouses, as have been purposely built within man's memory.” It would appear, as far as we can judge from the very imperfect materials which exist, that in the early period of Shakspeare's connexion with the Blackfriars it was the only private theatre. It is natural to conclude that the proprietors of this theatre, being the Queen's servants, were the most respectable of their vocation; conformed to the ordinances of the state with the utmost scrupulousness; endeavoured to attract a select audience rather than an uncritical multitude; and received higher prices for admission than were paid at the public theatres. The performances at the Blackfriars were for the most part

in the winter. Whether the performances were in the day or evening, artificial lights were used. The audience in what we now call the pit (then also so called) sat upon benches, and did not stand, as in the yard open to the sky of the public playhouses. There were small rooms corresponding with the private boxes of existing theatres. A portion of the audience, including those who aspired to the distinction of critics, sat upon the stage. It is possible, and indeed there is some evidence, that the rate of admission varied according to the attraction of the performance; and we may be pretty sure that a company like that of Shakspeare's generally charged at a higher rate than the larger theatres, which depended more upon the multitude.

At an early period, but not so early as the date of the certificate of 1589, which shows that Shakspeare was a sharer in the company acting at the Blackfriars, he is mentioned by contemporaries. Henry Chettle is one of the very few persons who have left us any distinct memorial of Shakspeare. He appears to have had some connexion with the writers of his time, in preparing their manuscripts for the press. He so prepared Greene's posthumous tract, 'The Groat's-worth of Wit,' copying out the author's faint and blotted sheets, written on his sick-bed. In this pamphlet of Greene's an insult was offered to Shakspeare; and it would appear from the allusions of Chettle that he was justly offended. Marlowe, also, resented, as well he might, a charge of impiety which was levelled against him. Chettle says, "With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted." By acquaintance he means com-

panionship, if not friendship. He goes on, "And with one of them I care not if I never be." He is supposed here to point at Marlowe. But to the other he tenders an apology, in all sincerity: "The other, whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that as I have moderated the heat of living writers, and might have used my own discretion (especially in such a case), the author being dead, that I did not I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault; because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes: besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art." In the Induction to 'Cynthia's Revels' Ben Jonson makes one of the personified spectators on the stage say, "I would speak with your author; where is he?" It may be presumed, therefore, that it was not uncommon for the author to mix with that part of the audience; and thus Henry Chettle may be good evidence of the civil demeanour of William Shakspeare. We may thus imagine the young author composedly moving amidst the throng of wits and critics that fill the stage. He moves amongst them modestly, but without any false humility. In worldly station, if such a consideration could influence his demeanour, he is fully their equal. They are for the most part, as he himself is, actors, as well as makers of plays. Phillips says Marlowe was an actor. Greene is reasonably conjectured to have been an actor. Peele and Wilson were actors of Shakspeare's own company; and so was Anthony Wadeson.

There can be little doubt that upon the early stage the occupations for the most part went together. The dialogue was less regarded than the action. A plot was hastily got up, with rude shows and startling incidents. The characters were little discriminated; one actor took the tyrant line, and another the lover; and ready words were at hand for the one to rant with and the other to whine. The actors were not very solicitous about the words, and often discharged their mimic passions in extemporaneous eloquence. In a few years the necessity of pleasing more refined audiences changed the economy of the stage. Men of high talent sought the theatre as a ready mode of maintenance by their writings; but their connexion with the stage would naturally begin in acting rather than in authorship. The managers, themselves actors, would think, and perhaps rightly, that an actor would be the best judge of dramatic effect. The rewards of authorship through the medium of the press were in those days small indeed; and paltry as was the dramatist's fee, the players were far better paymasters than the stationers. To become a sharer in a theatrical speculation offered a reasonable chance of competence, if not of wealth. If a sharer existed who was "excellent" enough in "the quality" he professed to fill the stage creditably, and added to that quality "a facetious grace in writing," there is no doubt that with "uprightness of dealing" he would, in such a company as that of the Blackfriars, advance rapidly to distinction, and have the countenance and friendship of "divers of worship." Those of *Shakspeare's* early competitors who approached the

nearest to him in genius possessed not that practical wisdom which carried him safely and honourably through a life beset with some temptations. They knew not the value of "government and modesty." He lived amongst them, but we may readily conclude that he was not of them.

In the spring of 1588, and through the summer also, we may well believe that Shakspeare abided in London, whether or not he had his wife and children about him. The course of public events was such that he would scarcely have left the capital, even for a few weeks. For the hearts of all men in the vast city were mightily stirred; and whilst in that "shop of war" might be heard on every side the din of "anvils and hammers waking to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice,"* the poet had his own work to do, in urging forward the noble impulse through which the people, of whatever sect or whatever party, willed that they would be free. It was the year of the Armada.

But, glorious as was the contemplation of the attitude of England during this year, the very energy that had called forth this noble display of patriotic spirit exhibited itself in domestic controversy when the pressure from without was removed. The same season that witnessed the utter destruction of the armament of Spain saw London excited to the pitch of fury by polemical disputes. It was not now the quarrel between Protestant and Romanist, but between the National Church and Puritanism. The theatres, those new and powerful teachers, lent themselves to the controversy. In

* Milton: 'Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing.'

some of these their licence to entertain the people was abused by the introduction of matters connected with religion and politics; so that in 1589 Lord Burghley not only directed the Lord Mayor to inquire what companies of players had offended, but a commission was appointed for the same purpose. How Shakspeare's company proceeded during this inquiry has been made out most clearly by the valuable document discovered at Bridgewater House by Mr. Collier, wherein they disclaim to have conducted themselves amiss. "These are to certify your Right Honourable Lordships that her Majesty's poor players, James Burbage, Richard Burbage, John Laucham, Thomas Greene, Robert Wilson, John Taylor, Anth. Wadson, Thomas Pope, George Peele, Augustine Phillipps, Nicholas Towley, William Shakespeare, William Kempe, William Johnson, Baptiste Goodale, and Robert Armyn, being all of them sharers in the Blackfriars playhouse, have never given cause of displeasure, in that they have brought into their plays matters of state and religion, unfit to be handled by them or to be presented before lewd spectators: neither hath any complaint in that kind ever been preferred against them or any of them. Wherefore they trust most humbly in your Lordships' consideration of their former good behaviour, being at all times ready and willing to yield obedience to any command whatsoever your Lordships in your wisdom may think in such case meet," &c.

"Nov. 1589."

In this petition, Shakspeare, a sharer in the theatre, but with others below him in the list, says, and they all say, that "they have never brought into their plays matters

of state and religion." The public mind in 1589-90 was furiously agitated by "matters of state and religion." A controversy was going on which is now known as that of *Martin Marprelate*, in which the constitution and discipline of the church were most furiously attacked in a succession of pamphlets; and they were defended with equal violence and scurrility. The theatres took part in the controversy, as we learn from a tract by Gabriel Harvey.

Shakspeare's great contemporary, Edmund Spenser, in a poem entitled 'The Tears of the Muses,' originally published in 1591, describes, in the 'Complaint' of Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, the state of the drama at the time in which he is writing:—

"Where be the sweet delights of learning's treasure,

That wont with comic sock to beautify
The painted theatres, and fill with pleasure

The listeners' eyes, and ears with melody;
In which I late was wont to reign as queen,
And mask in mirth with graces well beseen?

O! all is gone; and all that goodly glee,

Which wont to be the glory of gay wits,
Is laid a-bed, and nowhere now to see;

And in her room unseemly Sorrow sits,
With hollow brows and griesly countenance,
Marring my joyous gentle dalliance.

And him beside sits ugly Barbarism,

And brutish Ignorance, ycrept of late
Out of dread darkness of the deep abyss,

Where being bred, he light and heaven does hate;
They in the minds of men now tyrannize,
And the fair scene with rudeness foul disguise.

All places they with folly have possess'd,

And with vain toys the vulgar entertain;

But me have banished, with all the rest
 That whilom wont to wait upon my train,
 Fine Counterfesance, and unhurtful Sport,
 Delight, and Laughter, deck'd in seemly sort."

Spenser was in England in 1590-91, and it is probable that 'The Tears of the Muses' was written in 1590. The four stanzas which we have quoted are descriptive, as we think, of a period of the drama when it had emerged from the semi-barbarism by which it was characterized, "from the commencement of Shakspeare's boyhood, till about the earliest date at which his removal to London can be possibly fixed." * This description has nothing in common with those accounts of the drama which have reference to this "semi-barbarism." Nor does the writer of it belong to the school which considered a violation of the unities of time and place as the great defect of the English theatre. Nor does he assert his preference of the classic school over the romantic, by objecting, as Sir Philip Sidney objects, that "plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns." There had been, according to Spenser, a state of the drama that would

" Fill with pleasure
 The listeners' eyes, and ears with melody."

Can any comedy be named, if we assume that Shakspeare had, in 1590, not written any, which could be celebrated—and by the exquisite versifier of 'The Fairy Queen'—for its "melody"? Could any also be praised for

" That goodly glee
 Which wont to be the glory of gay wits " ?

Could the plays before Shakspeare be described by the most competent of judges—the most poetical mind of that age next to Shakspeare—as abounding in

“ Fine Counterfessance, and unhurtful Sport,
Delight, and Laughter, deck'd in seemly sort ” ?

We have not seen such a comedy, except some three or four of Shakspeare's, which could have existed before 1590. We do not believe there is such a comedy from any other pen. What, according to the ‘Complaint’ of Thalia, has banished such comedy? “Unseenly Sorrow,” it appears, has been fashionable;—not the proprieties of tragedy, but a Sorrow

“ With *hollow brows* and *grievous* countenance ;”—
the violent scenes of blood which were offered for the excitement of the multitude, before the tragedy of real art was devised. But this state of the drama is shortly passed over. There is something more defined. By the side of this false tragic sit “ugly Barbarism and brutish Ignorance.” These are not the barbarism and ignorance of the *old* stage ;—they are

“ Ycrept of late
Out of dread darkness of the deep abysm.”

They “*now* tyrannize;” they now “disguise” the fair scene “with *rudeness*.” The Muse of Tragedy, Melpomene, had previously described the “rueful spectacles” of “the stage.” It was a stage which had no “true tragedy.” But it *had* possessed

“ Delight, and Laughter, deck'd in seemly sort.”

The four stanzas which we have quoted are immediately followed by these four others :—

“ All these, and all that else the comic stage
With season'd wit and goodly pleasure graced,

By which man's life in his likest image
 Was limned forth, are wholly now defaced ;
 And those sweet wits, which wont the like to frame,
 Are now despis'd, and made a laughing game.

And he, the man whom Nature self had made
 To mock herself, and Truth to imitate,
 With kindly counter, under mimic shade,
 Our pleasant Willy, ah ! is dead of late :
 With whom all joy and jolly merriment
 Is also dedded, and in dolour drent.

Instead thereof scoffing Scurrility,
 And scornful Folly, with Contempt, is crept,
 Rolling in rhymes of shameless ribaldry,
 Without regard or due decorum kept ;
 Each idle wit at will presumes to make,
 And doth the Learned's task upon him take.

But that same gentle spirit, from whose pen
 Large streams of honey and sweet nectar flow,
 Scorning the boldness of such base-born men,
 Which dare their follies forth so rashly throw,
 Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell
 Than so himself to mockery to sell."

The love of personal abuse had driven out real comedy ;
 and there was *one* who, for a brief season, had left the
 madness to take its course. We cannot doubt that

" He, the man whom Nature self had made
 To mock herself, and Truth to imitate,"

was *William Shakspeare*.

England was sorely visited by the plague in 1592
 and 1593. The theatres were shut ; there were no per-
 formances at Court. Shakspeare, we may believe, during
 the long period of the continuance of the plague in
 London, had no occupation at the Blackfriars Theatre ;
 and the pastimes of the Lord Chamberlain's servants
 were dispensed with at the palaces. It is probable that

he was residing at his own Stratford. The leisure, we think, afforded him opportunity of preparing the most important of that wonderful series of historical dramas which unquestionably appeared within a few years of this period; and of producing some other dramatic compositions of the highest order of poetical excellence. It appears to us, looking at the printed labours of Shakspeare at this exact period, that there was some pause in his professional occupation; and that many months' residence in Stratford, from the autumn of 1592 to the summer of 1593, enabled him more systematically to cultivate those higher faculties which placed him, even in the opinion of his contemporaries, at the head of the living poets of England.

It is easy to believe that if any external impulse were wanting to stimulate the poetical ambition of Shakspeare—to make him aspire to some higher character than that of the most popular of dramatists—such might be found in 1593 in the clear field which was left for the exercise of his peculiar powers. Robert Greene had died on the 3rd of September, 1592, leaving behind him a sneer at the actor who aspired “to bombast out a blank verse.” Had his genius not been destroyed by the wear and tear, and the corrupting influences, of a profligate life, he never could have competed with the mature Shakspeare. But as we know that “the only Shake-scene in a country,” at whom the unhappy man presumed to scoff, felt the insult somewhat deeply, so we may presume he took the most effectual means to prove to the world that he was not, according to the malignant insinuation of his envious compeer, “an upstart crow beautified with our feathers.” We believe

that in the gentleness of his nature, when he introduced into 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

"The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of learning late deceas'd in beggary,"

he dropped a tear upon the grave of Greene, whose demerits were to be forgiven in his misery. On the 1st of June, 1593, Christopher Marlowe perished in a wretched brawl, "slain by Francis Archer," as the Register of Burials of the parish of St. Nicholas, Deptford, informs us. Who was left of the dramatists that could enter into competition with William Shakspeare, such as he then was? He was almost alone. The great disciples of his school had not arisen. Jonson had not appeared to found a school of a different character. It was for him, thenceforth, to sway the popular mind after his own fashion; to disregard the obligation which the rivalry of high talent might have imposed upon him of listening to other suggestions than those of his own lofty art; to make the multitude bow before that art, rather than that it should accommodate itself to their habits and prejudices. But at a period when the exercise of the poetical power in connexion with the stage was scarcely held amongst the learned and the polite in itself to be poetry, Shakspeare vindicated his reputation by the publication of the 'Venus and Adonis.' It was, he says, "the first heir of my invention." There may be a doubt whether Shakspeare meant to say literally that this was the first poetical work that he had produced; or whether he held, in deference to some critical opinions, that his dramatic productions could not be classed amongst the heirs of "invention." We think that he meant to use the words literally; and

that he used them at a period when he might assume, without vanity, that he had taken his rank amongst the poets of his time. He dedicates to the Earl of Southampton something that had not before been given to the world. He calls his verses "unpolished lines;" he vows to take advantage of all idle hours till he had honoured the young patron of the Muses with "some graver labour." But *invention* was received then, as it was afterwards, as the highest quality of the poet. Dryden says,—“A poet is a maker, as the word signifies; and he who cannot make, that is *invent*, hath his name for nothing.” We consider, therefore, that “my invention” is not the language of one unknown to fame. He was exhibiting the powers which he possessed upon a different instrument than that to which the world was accustomed; but the world knew that the power existed. We employ the word *genius* always with reference to the inventive or creative faculty. Substitute the word *genius* for *invention*, and the expression used by Shakspeare sounds like arrogance. But the substitution may indicate that the actual expression could not have been used by one who came forward for the first time to claim the honours of the poet. It has been argued from this expression that Shakspeare had produced nothing original before the ‘*Venus and Adonis*’—that up to the period of its publication, in 1593, he was only a repairer of the works of other men. We hold that the expression implies the direct contrary.

We have a distinct record when the theatres were re-opened after the plague. The ‘*Diary*’ of Philip Henslowe records that “the Earl of Sussex his men” acted ‘*Huon of Bordeaux*’ on the 28th of December,

1593. Henslowe appears to have had an interest in this company. It is probable that Shakspeare's theatre of the Blackfriars was opened about the same period. We have some evidence to show what was the duration of the winter season at this theatre; for the same diary shows that from June, 1594, the performances of the theatre at Newington Butts were a joint undertaking by the Lord Admiral's men and the Lord Chamberlain's men. How long this association of two companies lasted is not easy to determine; but during the month of June we have entries of the exhibition of 'Andronicus,' of 'Hamlet,' and of 'The Taming of a Shrew.' No subsequent entries exhibit the names of plays which have any real or apparent connexion with Shakspeare. It appears that in December, 1593, Richard Burbage entered into a bond with Peter Streete, a carpenter, for the performance on the part of Burbage of the covenants contained in an indenture of agreement by which Streete undertook to erect a new theatre for Burbage's company. This was the famous Globe on the Bankside, of which Shakspeare was unquestionably a proprietor. We thus see that in 1594 there were new demands to be made upon his invention; and we may reasonably conclude that the reliance of Burbage and his other fellows upon their poet's unequalled powers was one of their principal inducements to engage in this new enterprise.

In the midst of his professional engagements, which doubtless were renewed with increased activity after their long suspension, Shakspeare published his 'Rape of Lucrece.' He had vowed to take advantage of all idle hours till he had honoured Lord Southampton

with some graver labour than the first heir of his invention. The 'Venus and Adonis' was entered in the Registers of the Stationers' Company on the 18th of April, 1593. The 'Lucrece' appears in the same Registers on the 9th of May, 1594. That this elaborate poem was wholly or in part composed in that interval of leisure which resulted from the shutting of the theatres in 1593 may be reasonably conjectured; but it is evident that during the year which had elapsed between the publication of the first and the second poem, Shakspeare had been brought into more intimate companionship with his noble patron. The language of the first dedication is that of distant respect, the second is that of grateful friendship. At the period when Shakspeare dedicated to him his 'Venus and Adonis' Lord Southampton was scarcely twenty years of age. He is supposed to have become intimate with Shakspeare from the circumstance that his mother had married Sir Thomas Heneage, who filled the office of Treasurer of the Chamber, and in the discharge of his official duties would be brought into frequent intercourse with the Lord Chamberlain's players. This is Drake's theory. The more natural belief appears to be that he had a strong attachment to literature, and, with the generous impetuosity of his character, did not regard the distinctions of rank to the extent with which they were regarded by men of colder temperaments and more worldly minds. Shakspeare appears to have been the first amongst the writers of his day that offered a public tribute to the merits of the young nobleman. Both the dedications, and especially that of 'Lucrece,' are conceived in a modest and a manly spirit, entirely

different from the ordinary language of literary adulation. There is evidence in the second dedication of a higher sort of intercourse between the two minds than consists with any forced adulation of any kind, and especially with any extravagant compliments to the learning and to the abilities of a superior in rank. Such testimonies are always suspicious; and probably honest old Florio, when he dedicated his 'World of Words' to the Earl in 1598, shows pretty correctly what the race of panegyrists expected in return for their compliments: "In truth, I acknowledge an entire debt, not only of my best knowledge, but of all; yea of more than I know, or can, to your bounteous lordship, in whose pay and patronage I have lived some years; to whom I owe and vow the years I have to live. But, as to me, and many more, the glorious and gracious sunshine of your honour hath infused light and life." There is an extraordinary anecdote told by Rowe of Lord Southampton's munificence to Shakspeare, which seems to bring the poet somewhat near to Florio's plain-speaking association of pay and patronage:—"What grace soever the Queen conferred upon him, it was not to her only he owed the fortune which the reputation of his wit made. He had the honour to meet with many great and uncommon marks of favour and friendship from the Earl of Southampton, famous in the histories of that time for his friendship to the unfortunate Earl of Essex. It was to that noble lord that he dedicated his poem of 'Venus and Adonis.' There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakspeare's, that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William D'Avenant, who

was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted; that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds, to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost equal to that profuse generosity the present age has shown to French dancers and Italian singers." This is one of the many instances in which we are not warranted in rejecting a tradition, however we may look suspiciously upon the accuracy of its details. D'Avenant could scarcely be very well acquainted with Shakspeare's affairs, for he was only ten years old when Shakspeare died. The sum mentioned as the gift of the young nobleman to the poet is so large, looking at the value of money in those days, that it could scarcely consist with the independence of a generous spirit to bear the load of such a prodigality of bounty. The notions of those days were, however, different from ours. Examples will readily suggest themselves of the most lavish rewards bestowed by princes and nobles upon great painters. They received such gifts without any compromise of their intellectual dignity. It was the same then with poets. According to the habits of the time Shakspeare might have received a large gift from Lord Southampton, without any forfeiture of his self-respect. Nevertheless, Rowe's story must still appear sufficiently apocryphal: "My Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds, to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to." It is not necessary to account for the gradual acquisition of property by Shakspeare that we should

yield our assent to this tradition, without some qualification. In 1589, when Lord Southampton was a lad at College, Shakspeare had already acquired that property which was to be the foundation of his future fortune. He was then a shareholder in the Blackfriars Theatre. That the adventure was a prosperous one, not only to himself but to his brother shareholders, may be inferred from the fact that four years afterwards they began the building of another theatre. The Globe was commenced in December, 1593; and being constructed for the most part of wood, was ready to be opened, we should imagine, in the summer of 1594. In 1596 the same prosperous company were prepared to expend considerable sums upon the repair and extension of their original theatre, the Blackfriars. The name of Shakspeare occupies a prominent position in the document from which we collect this fact: it is a petition to the Lords of the Privy Council from "Thomas Pope, Richard Burbadge, John Hemings, Augustine Philips, William Shakespeare, William Kempe, William Slye, Nicholas Tooley, and others, servants to the Right Honorable the Lord Chamberlain to her Majesty;" and it sets forth that they are "the owners and players of the private theatre in the Blackfriars; that it hath fallen into decay; and that it has been found necessary to make the same more convenient for the entertainment of auditories coming thereto." It then states what is important to the present question:—"To this end your petitioners have all and each of them put down sums of money according to their shares in the said theatre, and which they have justly and honestly gained by the exercise of their quality of stage-players." It then

alleges that certain inhabitants of the precinct had besought the Council not to allow the said private house to remain open, "but hereafter to be shut up and closed, to the manifest and great injury of your petitioners, who have no other means whereby to maintain their wives and families, but by the exercise of their quality as they have heretofore done." The common proprietorship of the company in the Globe and Blackfriars is also noticed:—"In the summer season your petitioners are able to play at their new-built house on the Bankside, called the Globe, but in the winter they are compelled to come to the Blackfriars." If the winter theatre be shut up, they say they will be "unable to practise themselves in any plays or interludes when called upon to perform for the recreation and solace of her Majesty and her honourable Court, as they have been heretofore accustomed." Though the Registers of the Council and the Office-books of the Treasurer of the Chamber are wanting for this exact period, we have here the distinct evidence of the intimate relation between Shakspeare's company and the Court. The petitioners, in concluding by the prayer that their "honourable Lordships will grant permission to finish the reparations and alterations they have begun," add as a reason for this favour that they "have hitherto been well ordered in their behaviour and just in their dealings." The performances at the Blackfriars went on without interruption. Shakspeare, in 1597, bought "all that capital messuage or tenement in Stratford called the New Place." This appears to have been his first investment in property distinct from his theatrical speculations. The purchase of the best

house in his native town, at a period of his life when his professional occupations could have allowed him little leisure to reside in it, would appear to have had in view an early retirement from a pursuit which probably was little agreeable to him. His powers as a dramatic writer might be profitably exercised without being associated with the actor's vocation. We know from other circumstances that at this period Stratford was nearest to his heart. On the 24th of January, 1598, Mr. Abraham Sturley, an alderman of Stratford, writes to his brother-in-law, Richard Quiney, then in London:—"I would write nothing unto you now—but come home. I pray God send you comfortably home. This is one special remembrance, from your father's motion. It seemeth by him that our countryman Mr. Shakspeare is willing to disburse some money upon some odd yard land or other at Shottery, or near about us. He thinketh it a very fit pattern to move him to deal in the matter of our tithes. By the instructions you can give him thereof, and by the friends he can make therefore, we think it a fair mark for him to shoot at, and not impossible to hit. It obtained, would advance him indeed, and would do us much good." We thus see that in a year after the purchase of New Place, Shakspeare's accumulation of money was going on. The worthy alderman and his connexions appear to look confidently to their countryman, Mr. Shakspeare, to assist them in their needs. On the 4th of November, in the same year, Sturley again writes a very long letter "to his most loving brother Mr. Richard Quiney, at the Bell, in Carter Lane, in London," in which he says of a letter written

by Quiney to him on the 21st of October, that it imported, amongst other matters, "that our countryman Mr. W. Shakspeare would procure us money, which I well like of, as I shall hear when, and where, and how; and I pray let not go that occasion, if it may sort to any indifferent conditions." Quiney himself at this very time writes the following characteristic letter to his "loving good friend and countryman, Mr. William Shakspeare:"—"Loving countryman, I am bold of you as of a friend, craving your help with thirty pounds upon Mr. Bushell and my security, or Mr. Myttons with me. Mr. Rosswell is not come to London as yet, and I have especial cause. You shall friend me much in helping me out of all the debts I owe in London, I thank God, and much quiet to my mind which would not be indebted. I am now towards the Court in hope your answer for the dispatch of my business. You shall neither lose credit nor money by me, the Lord willing; and now but persuade yourself so as I hope, and you shall not need to fear but with all hearty thankfulness I will hold my time, and content your friend, and if we bargain farther, you shall be the paymaster yourself. My time bids me to hasten to an end, and so I commit this to your care and hope of your help. I fear I shall not be back this night from the Court. Haste. The Lord be with you and with us all. Amen. From the Bell in Carter Lane, the 25th October, 1598. Yours in all kindness, Ryc. Quiney." The anxious dependence which these honest men appear to have upon the good offices of their townsman is more satisfactory even than the

evidence which their letters afford of his worldly condition.

In the midst of this prosperity the registers of the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon present to us an event which must have thrown a shade over the brightest prospects. The burial of the only son of the poet is recorded in 1596. Hamnet was born on the 2nd of February, 1585; so that at his death he was eleven years and six months old. He was a twin child; and it is not unlikely that he was constitutionally weak. Some such cause interfered probably with the education of the twin-sister Judith; for whilst Susanna, the elder, is recorded to have been "witty above her sex," and wrote a firm and vigorous hand, as we may judge from her signature to a deed in 1639, the mark of Judith appears as an attesting witness to a conveyance in 1611.

With the exception of this inevitable calamity, the present period may probably be regarded as a happy epoch in Shakspeare's life. He had conquered any adverse circumstances by which his earlier career might have been impeded. He had taken his rank among the first minds of his age; and, above all, his pursuits were so engrossing as to demand a constant exercise of his faculties, and to demand that exercise in the cultivation of the highest and the most pleasurable thoughts. This was the period to which belong the great histories of 'Richard II.,' 'Richard III.,' and 'Henry IV.,' and the delicious comedies of the 'Merchant of Venice,' 'Much Ado about Nothing,' and 'Twelfth Night.' These productions afford the most abundant evidence that the greatest of intellects was in the most healthful

possession of its powers. These were not hasty adaptations for the popular appetite, as we may well believe some of the earlier plays were in their first shape; but highly-wrought performances, to which all the method of his cultivated art had been strenuously applied. It was at this period that the dramatic poet appears not to have been satisfied with the applause of the Globe or the Blackfriars, or even with the gracious encouragements of a refined Court. During three years he gave to the world careful editions of some of these plays, as if to vindicate the drama from the pedantic notion that the Muses of tragedy and comedy did not meet their sisters upon equal ground. 'Richard II.' and 'Richard III.' were published in 1597; 'Love's Labour's Lost,' and 'Henry IV., Part I.,' in 1598; 'Romeo and Juliet,' corrected and augmented, in 1599; 'Henry IV., Part II.,' the 'Merchant of Venice,' 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' and 'Much Ado about Nothing,' in 1600. The system of publication then ceased. It no doubt interfered with the interests of his fellows; and Shakspeare was not likely to assert an exclusive interest, or to gratify an exclusive pride, at the expense of his associates. But his reputation was higher than that of any other man, when only four of his plays were accessible to the *readers* of poetry. In 1598 it was proclaimed, not timidly or questionably, that "as Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for tragedy and comedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare, among the English, is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage:" and "As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare." It was

certainly not at this period of Shakspeare's life that he wrote, with reference to himself, unlocking his heart to some nameless friend :—

“ When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweepe my outcast state.”

Sonnets of Shakspeare were in existence in 1598, when Meres tells us of “his sugared sonnets among his private friends.” We do not receive these Sonnets altogether as evidences of Shakspeare's personal history or feelings. We believe that the order in which they were printed is an arbitrary one ; that some form a continuous poem or poems, that others are isolated in their subjects and the persons to whom they are addressed ; that some may express the poet's personal feelings, that others are wholly fictitious, dealing with imaginary loves and jealousies, and not attempting to separate the personal identity of the artist from the sentiments which he expressed, and the situations which he delineated. We believe that, taken as works of art, having a certain degree of continuity, the Sonnets of Spenser, of Daniel, of Drayton, of Shakspeare, although in many instances they might shadow forth real feelings and be outpourings of the inmost heart, were presented to the world as exercises of fancy, and were received by the world as such. Even of those portions of these remarkable lyrics which appear to have an obvious reference to the poet's feelings and circumstances, we cannot avoid rejecting the principle of continuity ; for they clearly belong to different periods of his life, if they are the reflection of his real sentiments. We have the playfulness of an early love, and the agonizing throes of an unlawful passion. They speak of a period when the writer had

won no honour or substantial rewards—"in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes," the period of his youth, if the allusion was at all real; and yet the writer is

"With time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn."

One little dedicatory poem says,

"Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written embassy,
To witness duty, not to show my wit."

Another (and it is distinctly associated with what we hold to be a continued little poem, wholly fictitious, in which the poet dramatizes as it were the poetical character) boasts that

"Not marble, not the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme."

Without attempting therefore to disprove that these Sonnets were addressed to the Earl of Southampton, or to the Earl of Pembroke, we must leave the reader who fancies he can find in them a shadowy outline of Shakspeare's life to form his own conclusion from their careful perusal. They want unity and consistency too much to be received as credible illustrations of this life. The 71st to the 74th Sonnets seem bursting from a heart oppressed with a sense of its own unworthiness, and surrendered to some overwhelming misery. There is a line in the 74th which points at suicide. We cling to the belief that the sentiments here expressed are essentially dramatic. In the 32nd Sonnet, where we recognise the man Shakspeare speaking in his own modest and cheerful spirit, death is to come across his "*well-contented* day." We must place one sentiment in opposition to the other, and then the effect is neu-

tralized. The opinion which we have formed of the probable admixture of the artificial and the real in the Sonnets, arising from their supposed original fragmentary state, necessarily leads to the belief that some are accurate illustrations of the poet's situation and feelings. It is collected from these Sonnets, for example, that his profession as a player was disagreeable to him; and this complaint is found amongst those portions which may be separated from the series of verses which appear to us to be written in an artificial character. It might be addressed to any one of his family, or some honoured friend, such as Lord Southampton :—

“ O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means, which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.”

But if from his professional occupation his nature was felt by him to be subdued to what it worked in,—if thence his name received a brand,—if vulgar scandal sometimes assailed him,—he had high thoughts to console him, such as were never before imparted to mortal. This was probably written in some period of dejection, when his heart was ill at ease, and he looked upon the world with a slight tinge of indifference, if not of dislike. Every man of high genius has felt something of this. It was reserved for the highest to throw it off, “like dew-drops from the lion's mane.” But the profound self-abasement and despondency of the 74th Sonnet, exquisite as the diction is, appear to us unreal, as a representation of the mental

state of William Shakspeare; written, as it most probably was, at a period of his life when he revels and luxuriates (in the comedies which belong to the close of the sixteenth century) in the spirit of enjoyment, gushing from a heart full of love for his species, at peace with itself and with all the world.

About the close of the year 1599, the Blackfriars Theatre was remarkable for the constant presence of two men of high rank, who were there seeking amusement and instruction as some solace for the bitter mortifications of disappointed ambition. "My Lord Southampton and Lord Rutland came not to the Court; the one doth but very seldom; they pass away the time in London merely in going to plays every day."* Essex had arrived from Ireland on the 28th of September, 1599—not

"Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,"—

not surrounded with swarms of citizens who

"Go forth, and fetch their conquering Cæsar in,"—

but a fugitive from his army; one who in his desire for peace had treated with rebels, and had brought down upon him the censures of the Court; one who knew that his sovereign was surrounded with his personal enemies, and who in his reckless anger once thought to turn his army homeward to compel justice at their hands; one who at last rushed alone into the Queen's presence, "full of dirt and mire," and found that he was in the toils of his foes. From that Michaelmas till the 26th of August, 1600, Essex was in the custody

Letter of Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sydney, in the Sydney Papers.

of the Lord Keeper; in free custody as it was termed, but to all intents a prisoner. It was at this period that Southampton and Rutland passed "away the time in London merely in going to plays every day." Southampton, in 1598, had married Elizabeth Vernon, a cousin of Lord Essex. The marriage was without the consent of the Queen; and therefore Southampton was under the ban of the Court, having been peremptorily dismissed by Elizabeth from the office to which Essex had appointed him in the expedition to Ireland. Rutland was also connected with Essex by family ties, having married the daughter of Lady Essex, by her first husband, the accomplished Sir Philip Sidney. The season when these noblemen sought recreation at the Theatre was one therefore of calamity to themselves, and to the friend who was at the head of their party in the state. At Shakspeare's theatre there were at this period abundant materials for the highest intellectual gratification. Of Shakspeare's own works we know that at the opening of the seventeenth century there were twenty plays in existence. Thirteen (considering 'Henry IV.' as two parts) are recorded by Meres in 1598; 'Much Ado About Nothing,' and 'Henry V.' (not in Meres' list), were printed in 1600; and we have to add the three parts of 'Henry VI.,' 'The Taming of the Shrew,' and the original 'Hamlet,' which are also wanting in Meres' record, but which were unquestionably produced before this period. We cannot with extreme precision fix the date of any novelty from the pen of Shakspeare when Southampton and Rutland were amongst his daily auditors; but there is every reason to believe that 'As You Like It'

belongs as nearly as possible to this exact period. It is pleasant to speculate upon the tranquillizing effect that might have been produced upon the minds of the banished courtiers by the exquisite philosophy of this most delicious play. It is pleasant to imagine Southampton visiting Essex in the splendid prison of the Lord Keeper's house, and there repeating to him from time to time those lessons of wisdom that were to be found in the woods of Arden. We could almost slide into the belief that 'As You Like It' had an especial reference to the circumstances in which Essex and Southampton were placed in the spring of 1600. There is nothing desponding in its tone, nothing essentially misanthropical in its philosophy. Jaques stands alone in his railing against mankind. The healing influences of nature fall sweetly and fruitfully upon the exiled Duke and his co-mates. But, nevertheless, the ingratitude of the world is emphatically dwelt upon, even amidst the most soothing aspects of a pure and simple life "under the greenwood tree."

The period at which Essex fell upon the block, and Southampton was under condemnation, must have been a gloomy period in the life of Shakspeare. The friendship of Southampton in all likelihood raised the humble actor to that just appreciation of himself which could alone prevent his nature being subdued to what it worked in. There had been a compromise between the inequality of rank and the inequality of intellect, and the fruit had been a continuance and a strengthening of that "love" which seven years earlier had been described as "without end." Those ties were now broken by calamity. The accomplished noble, a prisoner

looking daily for death, could not know the depth of the love of his "especial friend."* He was beyond the reach of any service that this friend could render him. All was gloom and uncertainty. It has been said, and we believe without any intention to depreciate the character of the great poet, that "There seems to have been a period of Shakspeare's life when his heart was ill at ease, and ill content with the world or his own conscience; the memory of hours mis-spent, the pang of affection misplaced or unrequited, the experience of man's worsen nature, which intercourse with ill-chosen associates, by choice or circumstance, peculiarly teaches;—these, as they sank down into the depths of his great mind, seem not only to have inspired into it the conception of *Lear* and *Timon*, but that of one primary character, the censurer of mankind."† The genius of Shakspeare was so essentially dramatic, that neither *Lear*, nor *Timon*, nor *Jaques*, nor the Duke in '*Measure for Measure*,' nor *Hamlet*, whatever censure of mankind they may express, can altogether be held to reflect "a period of Shakspeare's life when his heart was ill at ease, and ill content with the world." That period is referred to the beginning of the seventeenth century, to which the plays belong that are said to exhibit these attributes.‡ But from this period there is certainly a more solemn cast of thought in all the works of the great poet. The influence of time in the

* The expression is used by Southampton in his letter to Lord Ellesmere introducing Shakspeare and Burbage in 1608. See Collier's '*New Facts*,' p. 33.

† Hallam's '*Literature of Europe*,' vol. iii., p. 568.

‡ Mr. Hallam refers to '*Hamlet*' in its altered form.

formation and direction of the poetical power must yet be taken into account, as well as any temper arising out of passing events. Shakspeare was now thirty-seven years of age. He had attained to the consciousness of his own intellectual strength, and he had acquired by long practice the mastery of his own genius. He had already learnt to direct the stage to higher and nobler purposes than those of mere amusement. It might be carried farther into the teaching of the highest philosophy through the medium of the grandest poetry. The epoch which produced 'Othello,' 'Lear,' and 'Macbeth' has been described as exhibiting the genius of Shakspeare in full possession and habitual exercise of power, "at its very point of culmination."

The year 1601 was also a year which brought to Shakspeare a great domestic affliction. His father died on the 8th of September of that year. It is impossible not to feel that Shakspeare's family arrangements, imperfectly as we know them, had especial reference to the comfort and honour of his parents. When he bought New Place in 1597, his occupations then demanding his presence in London through great part of the year, his wife and children, we may readily imagine, were under the same roof with his father and mother. They had sighed over the declining health of his little Hamnet,—they had watched over the growth of his Susanna and Judith. If restricted means had at any previous period assailed them, he had provided for the comforts of their advanced age. And now that **father**, the companion of his boyhood—he who had led **him** forth into the fields and had taught him to look at nature with a practical eye—was gone. More materials

for deep thought in the year 1601. The Register of Stratford attests the death of this earliest friend.

The fortieth volume of the registers of the Town Council of Aberdeen contains some entries, which are not without their reference to the life of Shakspeare:—

“ Nono Octobris 1601.

“ Ordinance to the dean of gild.

“ The samen day The prouest Bailleis and counsall ordanis the syme of threttie tua merkis to be gevin to the Kingis ser wandes presently in this burcht..quha playes comedeis and staige playes Be reasoun they ar recommendit be his majesties speciall letter and hes played sum of their comedies in this burcht and ordanis the said syme to be payit to tham be the dean of gild quhilk salbe allowit in his comptis.”

“ 22 Octr 1601.

“ The Quhilk day Sir Francis Hospitall of Haulszie Knycht Frenschman being recommendit be his majistie to the Prouest Bailleis and Counsall of this brocht to be favorable Interteneit with the gentilmen his majesties seruands efter specifeit quha war direct to this burcht be his majestie to accompanie the said Frenshman being ane nobillman of France cumming only to this burcht to sie the towne and cuntrie the said Frenshman with the knightis and gentillmen folowing wer all ressauit and admittit Burgesses of Gild of this burcht quha gawe thair aithis in common form folowis the names of thame that war admittit burgesses

Sir Francis Hospitall of halzie knycht

Sir Claud Hamiltoun of Schawfeild knycht

Sir Johm Grahame of orkill knycht

Sir John Ramsay of Ester Baronie knycht

James Hay James Auchterlony Robert Ker James Schaw

Thomas foster James Gleghorne David Drummond

Seruitors to his Majestie

Monsieur de Scheyne Monsieur la Bar Seruitours to the said

Sir Francis

James Law

James Hamiltoun seruitour to the said Sir Claud

Archibald Sym Trumpeter

Laurence Fletcher comediane to his majestie.

Mr Daudid Wod

Johne Bronderstainis"

These documents present something more than the facts, that a company of players, specially recommended by the King, were paid a gratuity from the Corporation of Aberdeen for their performances in that town, one of them subsequently receiving the freedom of the borough. The provost, baillies, and council ordain that thirty-two marks should be given to the *King's servants* then in that borough, who played comedies and stage-plays. The circumstance that they are recommended by the King's special letter is not so important as the description of them as the King's servants. Thirteen days after the entry of the 9th of October, at which first period these servants of the King had played some of their comedies, Lawrence Fletcher, comedian to his Majesty, is admitted a burges of guild of the borough of Aberdeen—the greatest honour which the Corporation could bestow. He is admitted to this honour in company with a nobleman of France visiting Aberdeen for the gratification of his curiosity, and recommended by the King to be favourably entertained; as well as with three men of rank, and others, who were directed by his Majesty to accompany "the said Frenchman." All the party are described in the document as knights and gentlemen. We have to inquire, then, who was Lawrence Fletcher, comedian to his Majesty? Assuredly the King had not in his service a company of Scotch players. In 1599 he had licensed a company of

English comedians to play at Edinburgh. Fond as James was of theatrical exhibitions, he had not the means of gratifying his taste, except through the visits of English comedians. Scotland had no drama in the proper sense of the word. We may safely conclude that King James would have no Scottish company of players, because Scotland had no dramas to play.

"Lawrence Fletcher, comedian to his Majesty," was undoubtedly an Englishman; and "the King's servants presently in this borough who play comedies and stage-plays" were as certainly English players. There are not many facts known by which we can trace the history of Lawrence Fletcher. He is not mentioned amongst "the names of the principal actors in all these plays," which list is given in the first folio edition of Shakspeare; but he undoubtedly belonged to Shakspeare's company. Augustine Phillipps, who, by his will, in 1605, bequeathed a thirty-shilling piece of gold to his "fellow" William Shakspeare, also bequeathed twenty shillings to his "fellow" Lawrence Fletcher. But there is more direct evidence than this of the connexion of Fletcher with Shakspeare's company. The patent of James I., dated at Westminster on the nineteenth of May, 1603, in favour of the players acting at the Globe, is headed "Pro Laurentio Fletcher et Willielmo Shakspeare et aliis;" and it licenses and authorises the performances of "Laurence Fletcher, William Shakspeare, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillipps, John Hemings, Henrie Condel, William Sly, Robert Armin, Richard Cowly, and the rest of their associates." The connexion in 1603 of Fletcher and Shakspeare cannot be more distinctly established than by this document.

Chalmers says that Fletcher "was placed before Shakspeare and Richard Burbage in King James's licence as much perhaps by accident as by design." The Aberdeen Register is evidence against this opinion. Lawrence Fletcher, comedian to his Majesty, is admitted to honours which are not bestowed upon the other King's servants who had acted plays in the borough of Aberdeen in 1601. Lawrence Fletcher is first named in the letters patent of 1603. It is evident, we think, that he was admitted a burghess of Aberdeen as the head of the company, and that he was placed first in the royal licence for the same reason. But there is a circumstance, we apprehend, set forth in the Aberdeen Registers which is not only important with reference to the question of Shakspeare having visited Scotland, but which explains a remarkable event in the history of the stage. The company rewarded by the Corporation of Aberdeen on the 9th of October, 1601, were not only recommended by his Majesty's special letter, but they were the King's servants. Lawrence Fletcher, according to the second entry, was comedian to his Majesty. This English company, then, had received an honour from the Scottish King, which had not been bestowed upon them by the English Queen. They were popularly termed the Queen's players about 1590; but, subsequently, we find them invariably mentioned in the official entries as the Lord Chamberlain's servants. Mr. Collier, in noticing the licence '*Pro Laurentio Fletcher et Willielmo Shakspeare et aliis*,' says that the Lord Chamberlain's company "by virtue of this instrument, in which they are termed 'our servants,' became the King's players, and were so after-

wards constantly distinguished." But the instrument did not create Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakspeare, and others, the King's servants: it recognises them as the King's servants already appointed: "Know you that we, of our special grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, have licensed and authorised, and by these presents do license and authorise, these our servants," &c. They are licensed to use and exercise their art and faculty "as well for the recreation of our loving subjects as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall think good to see them." They are "to show and exercise publicly to their best commodity when the infection of the plague shall decrease, within their now usual house called the Globe," as in all other places. The justices, mayors, sheriffs, and others to whom the letters patent are addressed, are called upon to aid and assist them, and to do them courtesies; and the instrument thus concludes: "And also what further favour you shall show to these our servants for our sake we shall take kindly at your hands." The terms of this patent exhibit towards the players of the Globe a favour and countenance, almost an affectionate solicitude for their welfare, which is scarcely reconcilable with a belief that they first became the King's players by virtue of this instrument. James arrived in London, at the Charter House, on the 7th of May, 1603. He then removed to the Tower, and subsequently to Greenwich on the 13th. The Privy Seal, directing the letters patent to Fletcher, Shakspeare, and others, is dated from Greenwich on the 17th of May; and in that document the exact words of the patent are prescribed. The words of the Privy Seal and of the patent undoubtedly

imply some previous appointment of the persons therein named as the King's servants. It appears scarcely possible that during the three days which elapsed between James taking up his residence at Greenwich, and the day on which the Privy Seal is issued, the Lord Chamberlain's servants, at the season of the plague, should have performed before the King, and have so satisfied him that he constituted them his own servants. It would at first seem improbable that amidst the press of business consequent upon the accession, the attention of the King should have been directed to the subject of players at all, especially in the selection of a company as his own servants, contrary to the precedent of the former reign. - If these players had been the servants of Elizabeth, their appointment as the servants of James might have been asked as a matter of course; but certain players were at once to be placed above all their professional brethren, by the King's own act, carried into effect within ten days after his arrival within his new metropolis. But all these objections are removed when we refer to the facts opened to us by the council registers of Aberdeen. King James the Sixth of Scotland had recommended his servants to the magistrates of Aberdeen; and Lawrence Fletcher, there can be no doubt, was one of those servants so recommended. The patent of James the First of England directed to Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakspeare, and others, eighteen months after the performances at Aberdeen, is directed to those persons as "our servants." It does not appoint them the King's servants, but recognises the appointment as already existing. Can there be a reasonable doubt that the appointment was ori-

ginally made by the King in Scotland, and subsisted when the same King ascended the English throne? Lawrence Fletcher was admitted a burghess of Guild of the borough of Aberdeen as comedian to his Majesty, in company with other persons who were servitors to his Majesty. He received that honour, we may conclude, as the head of the company, also the King's servants. We know not how he attained this distinction amongst his fellows, but it is impossible to imagine that accident so favoured him in two instances. The King's servant who was most favoured at Aberdeen, and the King's servant who is first in the patent in 1603, was surely placed in that position by the voice of his fellows, the other King's servants. William Shakspeare is named with him in a marked manner in the heading of the patent. Seven of their fellows are also named, as distinguished from "the rest of their associates." There can be no doubt of the identity of the Lawrence Fletcher, the servant of James VI. of Scotland, and the Lawrence Fletcher, the servant of James I. of England. Can we doubt that the King's servants who played comedies and stage plays in Aberdeen, in 1601, were, taken as a company, the King's servants who were licensed to exercise the art and faculty of playing, throughout all the realm, in 1603? If these points are evident, what reason have we to doubt that William Shakspeare, the second named in the licence of 1603, was amongst the King's servants at Aberdeen in 1601? Every circumstance concurs in the likelihood that he was of that number recommended by the King's special letter; and his position in the licence, even before Burbage, was, we may well believe, a compli-

ment to him who in 1601 had taught "our James" something of the power and riches of the English drama. These circumstances give us, we think, warranty to conclude that the story of Macbeth might have been suggested to Shakspeare upon Scottish ground; that the accuracy displayed in the local descriptions and allusions might have been derived from a rapid personal observation; and that some of the peculiarities of his witchcraft imagery might have been found in Scottish superstitions, and more especially in those which were rife at Aberdeen at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

In May, 1602, Shakspeare made a large addition to his property at Stratford by the purchase, from William and John Combe, for the sum of three hundred and twenty pounds, of one hundred and seven acres of arable land in the town of Old Stratford. The indenture, which is in the possession of Mr. Wheler of Stratford, is dated the 1st of May, 1602. The conveyance bears the signatures of the vendors of the property. But although it concludes in the usual form, "The parties to these presents having interchangeably set to their hands and seals," the counterpart (also in the possession of Mr. Wheler) has not the hand and seal of the purchaser of the property described in the deed as "William Shakespere, of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the countie aforesaide, Gentleman." The counterpart is not signed, and the piece of wax which is affixed to it is unimpressed with any seal. The acknowledgment of possession is however recorded. The property is delivered to Gilbert Shakspeare to the use of William. Gilbert was two years and a half younger than William, and in all

likelihood was the cultivator of the land which the poet thus bought, or assisted their father in the cultivation.

Amongst the few papers rescued from "time's devouring maw" which enable us to trace Shakspeare's career with any exactness, there is another which relates to the acquisition of property in the same year. It is a copy of Court Roll for the Manor of Rowington, dated the 28th of September, 1602, containing the surrender by Walter Getley to the use of William Shakspeare of a house in Stratford, situated in Walker Street. This tenement was opposite Shakspeare's house of New Place. It is now taken down; it was in existence a few years ago. This document, which is in the possession of Mr. Hunt, the town-clerk of Stratford, also shows that at the latter end of September, 1602, William Shakspeare, the purchaser of this property, was not at Stratford. It could not legally pass to him, being a copyhold, till he had done suit and service in the Lord's Court; and the surrender therefore provides that it should remain in the possession of the lord till he, the purchaser, should appear.

In the September of 1602 the Earl of Worcester, writing to the Earl of Shrewsbury, says, "We are frolic here in Court, much dancing in the Privy Chamber of country-dances before the Queen's Majesty, who is exceedingly pleased therewith." In the December she was entertained at Sir Robert Cecil's house in the Strand, and some of the usual devices of flattering mummery were exhibited before her. A few months saw a period to the frolic and the flattery. The last entry in the books of the Treasurer of the Chamber during the reign of Elizabeth, which pertains to Shak-

spere, is the following;—melancholy in the contrast between the Candlemas-Day of 1603, the 2nd of February, and the following 24th of March, when Elizabeth died:—"To John Hemynges and the rest of his companie, servaunts to the Lorde Chamberleyne, uppon the Councells Warraunte, dated at Whitehall the xxth of Aprill, 1603, for their paines and expences in presentinge before the late Queenes Ma^{tie} twoe playes, the one uppon St. Stephens day at night, and thother upon Candlemas day at night, for ech of which they were allowed, by way of her Ma^{ties} rewarde, tenne poundes, amounting in all to xx^{li}."

King James I. of England left his good city of Edinburgh on the 5th of April, 1603. He was nearly five weeks on the road. On the 7th of May he was safely lodged at the Charter House; and one of his first acts of authority was, as already noticed, after creating four new peers, and issuing a proclamation against robbery on the Borders, to order the Privy Seal for the patent to Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakspeare, and others. We learn from the patent itself that the King's servants were to perform publicly "when the infection of the plague shall decrease." It is clear that the King's servants were not at liberty then to perform publicly. How long the theatres were closed we do not exactly know; but a document is in existence, dated April 9th, 1604, directing the Lord Mayor of London, and Justices of Middlesex and Surrey, "to permit and suffer the three companies of players to the King, Queen, and Prince to exercise their plays in their severall and usual houses." On the 20th of October, 1603, Joan, the wife of the celebrated Edward Alleyn, writes

to her husband from London,—“About us the sickness doth cease, and likely more and more, by God's help, to cease. All the companies be come home, and well, for aught we know.” Her husband is hawking in the country, and Henslow, his partner, is at the Court. Shakspeare is in London. Some one propounded a theory that there was no real man called William Shakspeare, and that the plays which passed with his name were the works of Marlowe and others. This very letter of good Mrs. Alleyn shows that William Shakspeare not only lived, but went about pretty much like other people, calling common things by their common names, giving advice about worldly matters in the way of ordinary folk, and spoken of by the wife of his friend without any wonder or laudation, just as if he had written no ‘Midsummer Night's Dream,’ or ‘Othello’ :—“Aboute a weeke a goe there came a youthe, who said he was Mr. Francis Chalouer, who would have borrowed xli to have bought things for and said he was known unto you, and Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe, who came said he knewe hym not, onely he herde of hym that he was a roge so he was glade we did not lend him the monney. Richard Johnes [went] to seeke and inquire after the fellow, and said he had lent hym a horse. I feare me he gulled hym, thoughe he gulled not us. The youthe was a prety youthe, and handsome in appayrell : we knowe not what became of hym.”* But although Shakspeare was in London on the 20th of October, 1603, it is tolerably clear that the performances at the public theatres were not resumed till after the

* From the Papers in Dulwich College, printed in Mr. Collier's ‘Memoirs of Edward Alleyn.’

order of the 9th of April, 1604. In the Office Books of the Treasurer of the Chamber there is an entry of a payment of thirty-two pounds upon the Council's warrant dated at Hampton Court, February 8th, 1604, "by way of his Majesty's free gift" to Richard Burbage, one of his Majesty's comedians, "for the maintenance and relief of himself and the rest of his company, being prohibited to present any plays publicly in or near London, by reason of great peril that might grow through the extraordinary concourse and assembly of people, to a new increase of the plague, till it shall please God to settle the city in a more perfect health."* But though the public playhouses might be closed through the fear of an "extraordinary concourse and assembly of people," the King, a few months previous, had sent for his own players to a considerable distance to perform before the Court at Wilton. There is an entry in the same Office Book of a payment of thirty pounds to John Hemings "for the pains and expenses of himself and the rest of his company in coming from Mortlake in the county of Surrey unto the Court aforesaid, and there presenting before his Majesty one play on the 2nd of December last, by way of his Majesty's reward." Wilton was the seat of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, to whom it has been held that Shakspeare's Sonnets were addressed. We do not yield our assent to this opinion. But we know from good authority that this nobleman, "the most universally beloved and esteemed of any man of that age," (according to Clarendon,) befriended Shakspeare, and that his brother joined him in his acts of kindness. The dedication by John Heminge

Cunningham's 'Revels at Court,' p. xxxv.

and Henry Condell, prefixed to the first collected edition of the works of Shakspeare, is addressed "To the most noble and incomparable pair of brethren, William Earl of Pembroke, and Philip Earl of Montgomery." In the submissive language of poor players to their "singular good lords" they say, "When we value the places your Honours sustain, we cannot but know their dignity greater than to descend to the reading of these trifles; and while we name them trifles, we have deprived ourselves of the defence of our dedication. But since your Lordships have been pleased to think these trifles something, heretofore; and have prosecuted both them, and their author living, with so much favour: we hope that (they out-living him, and he not having the fate, common with some, to be executor to his own writings) you will use the like indulgence toward them you have done unto their parent." They subsequently speak of their Lordships liking the several parts of the volume when they were acted; but their author was the object of their personal regard and favour. The call to Wilton of Shakspeare's company might probably have arisen from Lord Pembroke's desire to testify this favour. It would appear to be the first theatrical performance before James in England. The favour of the Herberts towards Shakspeare thus began early. The testimony of the player-editors would imply that it lasted during the poet's life.

At the Christmas of the same year the King had taken up his residence at Hampton Court. It was here, a little before the period when the Conference on Conformity in Religion was begun, that the Queen and eleven ladies of honour were presenting Daniel's

Masque ; and Shakspeare and his fellows performed six plays before the King and Prince, receiving twenty nobles for each play. The patronage of the new King to his servants, players acting at the Globe, seems to have been constant and liberal. To Shakspeare this must have been a season of prosperity and of honour. The accession of the King gave him something better. His early friend and patron Southampton was released from a long imprisonment. Enjoying the friendship of Southampton and Pembroke, who were constantly about the King, their tastes may have led the monarch to a just preference of the works of Shakspeare before those of any other dramatist. The six plays performed before the King and Prince in the Christmas of 1603-4 at Hampton Court, were followed at the succeeding Christmas by performances "at the Banqueting-House at Whitehall," in which the plays of Shakspeare were preferred above those of every other competitor. There were eleven performances by the King's players, of which eight were plays of Shakspeare. Jonson shared this honour with him in the representation of 'Every One in his Humour,' and 'Every One out of his Humour.' A single play by Heywood, another by Chapman, and a tragedy by an unknown author, completed the list of these revels at Whitehall. It is told, Malone says, "upon authority which there is no reason to doubt, that King James bestowed especial honour upon Shakspeare." The story is told in the Advertisement to Lintot's edition of Shakspeare's Poems—"That most learned Prince, and great patron of learning, King James the First, was pleased with his own hand to

write an amicable letter to Mr. Shakespeare; which letter, though now lost, remained long in the hands of Sir William Davenant, as a credible person now living can testify." Was the honour bestowed as a reward for the compliment to the King in 'Macbeth,' or was the compliment to the King a tribute of gratitude for the honour?

We have seen that in the year 1602 Shakspeare was investing the gains of his profession in the purchase of property at Stratford. It appears from the original Fines of the Court of King's Bench, preserved in the Chapter-house, that a little before the accession of James, in 1603, Shakspeare had also purchased a messuage at Stratford, with barns, gardens, and orchards, of Hercules Underhill, for the sum of sixty pounds. There can be little doubt that this continued acquisition of property in his native place had reference to the ruling desire of the poet to retire to his quiet fields and the placid intercourse of society at Stratford, out of the turmoil of his professional life and the excitement of the companionship of the gay and the brilliant. And yet it appears highly probable that he was encouraged at this very period, through the favour of those who rightly estimated his merit, to apply for an office which would have brought him even more closely in connexion with the Court, that of Master of the Queen's Revels, to which office Samuel Daniel was appointed. It is not impossible that Shakspeare looked to this appointment as a compensation for his retirement from the profession of an actor, retaining his interest, however, as a theatrical proprietor. Be that as it may, he

still carried forward his ruling purpose of the acquisition of property at Stratford. In 1605 he accomplished a purchase which required a larger outlay than any previous investment. On the 24th of July, in the third year of James, a conveyance was made by Ralph Huband, Esq., to William Shakspeare, gentleman, of a moiety of a lease of the great and small tithes of Stratford, for the remainder of a term of ninety-two years, and the amount of the purchase was four hundred and forty pounds. There can be little doubt that he was the cultivator of his own land, availing himself of the assistance of his brother Gilbert, and, in an earlier period, probably of his father. An account in 1597 of the stock of malt in the borough of Stratford, is said to exhibit ten quarters in the possession of William Shakspeare, of Chapel Street Ward. New Place was situated in Chapel Street. The purchase of a moiety of the tithes of so large a parish as Stratford might require extensive arrangements for their collection. Tithes in those days were more frequently collected in kind than by a *modus*. But even if a *modus* was taken, it would require a knowledge of the value of agricultural produce to farm the tithes with advantage. But before the date of this purchase it is perfectly clear that William Shakspeare was in the exercise of the trading part of a farmer's business. He bought the hundred and seven acres of land of John and William Combe in May, 1602. In 1604 a declaration was entered in the Borough Court of Stratford, on a plea of debt, William Shakspeare against Philip Rogers, for the sum of thirty-five shillings and ten-pence, for corn delivered. The precept was issued in the usual form upon this declaration, the delivery of

the corn being stated to have taken place at several times in the first and second years of James. There cannot be more distinct evidence that William Shakspeare, at the very period when his dramas were calling forth the rapturous applause of the new Sovereign and his Court, and when he himself, as it would seem, was ambitious of a courtly office, did not disdain to pursue the humble though honourable occupation of a farmer in Stratford, and to exercise his just rights of property in connexion with that occupation. We must believe that he looked forward to the calm and healthful employment of the evening of his days, as a tiller of the land which his father had tilled before him, at the same time working out noble plans of poetical employment in his comparative leisure, as the best scheme of life in his declining years. The exact period when he commenced the complete realization of these plans is somewhat doubtful. He had probably ceased to appear as an actor before 1605. If the date 1608 be correctly assigned to a letter held to be written by Lord Southampton, it is clear that Shakspeare was not then an actor, for he is there described as "*till of late an actor of good account in the company, now a sharer in the same.*" His partial freedom from his professional labours certainly preceded his final settlement at Stratford.

In the conveyance by the Combes to Shakspeare in 1602, he is designated as William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon. The same designation holds in subsequent legal documents connected with Stratford; but there is no doubt that, at the period of the conveyance from the Combes, he was an actor in the company

performing at the Blackfriars and at the Globe ; and in tracing therefore the "whereabout" of Shakspeare, from the imperfect records which remain to us, we have assumed that where the fellows of Shakspeare are to be found, there is he to be also located. But in the belief that before 1608 he had ceased to be an actor, we are not required to assume that he was so constantly with his company as before that partial retirement. His interest would no doubt require his occasional presence with them, for he continued to be a considerable proprietor in their lucrative concerns. That prudence and careful management which could alone have enabled him to realize a large property out of his professional pursuits, and at the same time not to dissipate it by his agricultural occupations, appears to have been founded upon an arrangement by which he secured the assistance of his family, and at the same time made a provision for them. We have seen that in 1602 his brother Gilbert was his representative at Stratford. Richard, who was ten years his junior, and who, dying a year before him, was buried at Stratford, would also appear to have been resident there. His youngest brother Edmund, sixteen years his junior, was, there can be little question, associated with him in the theatre ; and he probably looked to him to attend to the management of his property in London, after he retired from any active attention to its conduct. But Edmund died early. He lived in the parish of St. Saviour's, in all probability at his brother's house in the liberty of the Clink ; and the register of burials of that parish has the following record :—"1607, December 31st, Edmond Shakespeare, a player, in the church." The death of

his brother might probably have had a considerable influence upon the habits of his life, and might have induced him to dispose of all his theatrical property, as there is reason to believe he did, several years before his death. The value of a portion of this property has been ascertained, as far as it can be, upon an estimate for its sale; and by this estimate the amount of his portion, as compared with that of his co-proprietors, is distinctly shown. In 1608 the question of the jurisdiction of the City in the Blackfriars, and especially with reference to the playhouse, was brought before Lord Ellesmere, the Chancellor. The proprietors of the theatre remained in undisturbed possession. Out of this attempt a negotiation appears to have arisen for the purchase of the property by the City; for amongst the documents connected with this attempt of the Corporation is found a paper headed, "For avoiding of the playhouse in the precinct of the Blackfriars." The document states, in conclusion, that "in the whole it will cost the Lord Mayor and the citizens at the least 7000*l*." Richard Burbage claims 1000*l*. for the fee, and for his four shares 933*l*. 6*s*. 8*d*. Laz. Fletcher owns three shares, which he rates at 700*l*., that is, at seven years' purchase. "W. Shakespeare asketh for the wardrobe and properties of the same playhouse 500^{li}, and for his four shares, the same as his fellowes Burbidge and Fletcher, viz. 933^{li} 6*s*. 8*d*." Heminge and Condell have each two shares, Taylor and Lowin each a share and a half; four more players each a half share; which they all value at the same rate. The hired men of the company also claim recompense for their loss; "and the widows

and orphans of players who are paid by the sharers at divers rates and proportions." It thus appears that, next to Richard Burbage, Shakspeare was the largest proprietor in the theatre; that Burbage was the exclusive owner of the real property, and Shakspeare of the personal. If the valuation be correct, Shakspeare's annual income derived from his shares in the Blackfriars alone, was 133*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* His wardrobe and properties, being perishable matters, were probably valued at five years' purchase, giving him an additional income of 100*l.* This income was derived from the Blackfriars alone. His property in the Globe Theatre was in all likelihood quite equal. He would, besides, derive additional advantages as the author of new plays. With a professional income, then, of 400*l.* or 500*l.* per annum, which may be held to be equal to six times the amount in our present money, it is evident that Shakspeare possessed the means not only of a liberal expenditure at his houses in London and at Stratford, but from the same source was enabled to realize considerable sums, which he invested in real property in his native place. All the records of Shakspeare's professional life, and the results of his success as exhibited in the accession of property, indicate a steady and regular advance. They show us that perseverance and industry were as much the characteristics of the man as the greatness of his genius; that he held with constancy to the course of life which he had early adopted; that year by year it afforded him increased competence and wealth; and that if he had the rare privilege of pur-

This valuable document was discovered by Mr. Collier, and published by him in his 'New Facts.'

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suing an occupation which called forth the highest exercise of his powers, rendering it in every essential a pleasurable occupation, he despised not the means by which he had risen : he lived in a free and genial intercourse with his professional brethren, and to the last they were his friends and fellows.

Aubrey says of Shakspeare, "He was wont to go to his native country once a-year." This statement, which there is no reason to disbelieve, has reference to the period when Shakspeare was engaged as an actor. There is another account of Shakspeare's mode of life, which does not contradict Aubrey, but brings down his information to a later period. In the 'Diary of the Rev. John Ward, Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon,' the manuscript of which was discovered in the library of the Medical Society of London, we find the following curious record of Shakspeare's later years:—"I have heard that Mr. Shakspeare was a natural wit, without any art at all; hee frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year, and for itt had an allowance so large, that hee spent att the rate of 1000*l.* a-year, as I have heard." The Diary of John Ward extends from 1648 to 1679; and it is in many respects interesting, from the circumstance that he united the practice of medicine to the performance of his duties as a parish priest. He was appointed to the vicarage of Stratford in 1662.

It is evident that, although forty-six years had elapsed since the death of Shakspeare, his memory was the leading association with Stratford-upon-Avon. After noticing that Shakspeare had two daughters, we find the

entry presented above. It is just possible that the new vicar of Stratford might have seen Shakspeare's younger daughter Judith, who was born in 1585, and, having married Thomas Quiney in 1616, lived to the age of seventy-seven, having been buried on the 9th of February, 1662. The descendants of Shakspeare's family and of his friends surrounded the worthy vicar on every side; and he appears to have thought it absolutely necessary to acquire such a knowledge of the productions of the great poet as might qualify him to speak of them in general society:—"Remember to peruse Shakespeare's plays, and bee much versed in them, that I may not bee ignorant in that matter." The honest vicar was not quite certain whether the fame of Shakspeare was only a provincial one, for he adds—"Whether Dr. Heylin does well, in reckoning up the dramattick poets which have been famous in England, to omit Shakespeare?" The good man is not altogether to be blamed for having previously to 1662 been "ignorant" of Shakspeare's plays. He was only thirty-three years of age; and his youth had been passed in the stormy period when the Puritans had well nigh banished all literature, and especially dramatic literature, from the minds of the people, in their intolerant proscription of all pleasure and recreation. At any rate we may accept the statements of the good vicar as founded upon the recollections of those with whom he was associated in 1662. It is wholly consistent with what we otherwise know of Shakspeare's life, that "he frequented the plays all his younger time." It is equally consistent that he "in his elder days lived at

Stratford." There is nothing improbable in the belief that he "supplied the stage with two plays every year." The last clause of the sentence is somewhat startling:—"And for it had an allowance so large, that he spent at the rate of 1000*l.* a-year, as I have heard." And yet the assertion must not be considered wholly an exaggeration. "He spent at the rate of 1000*l.* a-year," must mean the rate of the time when Mr. Ward is writing. During the half century which had preceded the Restoration there had been a more important decrease in the value of money than had even taken place in the reign of Elizabeth. During that reign the prices of all commodities were constantly rising; but after the reduction of the legal rate of interest from ten per cent. to eight in 1624, and from eight to six in 1651, the change was still more remarkable. Sir Josias Child, in 1688, says that five hundred pounds with a daughter, sixty years before, was esteemed a larger portion than two thousand pounds now. It would appear, therefore, that the thousand a-year in 1662 was not more than one-third of the amount in 1612; and this sum, from 300*l.* to 400*l.*, was, as near as may be, the amount which Shakspeare appears to have derived from his theatrical property. In all probability he held that property during the greater part of the period when he "supplied the stage with two plays every year;" and this indirect remuneration for his poetical labours might readily have been mistaken, fifty years afterwards, as "an allowance so large" for authorship that the good vicar records it as a memorable thing.

It is established that 'Othello' was performed in 1602;

'Hamlet,' greatly enlarged, was published in 1604; 'Measure for Measure' was acted before the Court on St. Stephen's night in the same year. If we place Shakspeare's partial retirement from his professional duties about this period, and regard the plays whose dates up to this point have not been fixed by any authentic record, or satisfactory combination of circumstances, we have abundant work in reserve for the great poet in the maturity of his intellect. 'Lear,' 'Macbeth,' 'Timon of Athens,' 'Troilus and Cressida,' 'Cymbeline,' 'The Winter's Tale,' 'The Tempest,' 'Henry VIII.,' 'Coriolanus,' 'Julius Cæsar,' 'Antony and Cleopatra,' eleven of the noblest productions of the human intellect, so varied in their character,—the deepest passion, the profoundest philosophy, the wildest romance, the most comprehensive history—what a glorious labour to fill the nine or ten remaining years of the life of the man who had left his native fields twenty years before to seek for advancement in doubtful and perilous paths,—in a profession which was denounced by some and despised by others,—amongst companions full of genius and learning, but who had perished early in their pride and their self-abandonment! And he returns wealthy and honoured to the bosom of those who are dearest to him—his wife and daughters, his mother, his sisters and brothers. The companions of his boyhood are all around him. They have been useful members of society in their native place. He has constantly kept up his intercourse with them. They have looked to him for assistance in their difficulties. He is come to be one of them, to dwell wholly amongst them, to take a deeper interest in their

pleasures and in their cares, to receive their sympathy. He is come to walk amidst his own fields, to till them, to sell their produce. His labour will be his recreation. In the activity of his body will the energy of his intellect find its support and its rest. His nature is eminently fitted for action as well as contemplation. Were it otherwise, he would have "bad dreams," like his own Hamlet. Morbid thoughts may have come over him "like a passing cloud;" but from this time his mind will be eminently healthful. The imagination and the reason henceforth will be wonderfully balanced. Much of this belongs to the progressive character of his understanding; something to his favourable position.

With the exception of a playful piece of ridicule in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' we know not of a single personality which can be alleged against Shakspeare, in an age when his dramatic contemporaries, especially, bespattered their rivals and their enemies as fiercely as any modern paragraph writer. But vulgar opinion, which is too apt most easily to recognise the power of talent in its ability to inflict pain, has assigned to Shakspeare a performance which has the quality, extraordinary as regards himself, of possessing scurrility without wit. It is something lower in the moral scale even than the fabricated ballad upon Sir Thomas Lucy; for it exhibits a wanton and unprovoked outrage upon an unoffending neighbour, in the hour of convivial intercourse. Rowe tells the story as if he thought he were doing honour to the genius of the man whose good qualities he is at the same moment

recording : "The latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be—in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends. He had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion, and, in that, to his wish ; and is said to have spent some years before his death at his native Stratford. His pleasurable wit and good nature engaged him in the acquaintance, and entitled him to the friendship, of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood. Amongst them, it is a story still remembered in that country that he had a particular intimacy with Mr. Combe, an old gentleman noted thereabouts for his wealth and usury : it happened, that in a pleasant conversation amongst their common friends, Mr. Combe told Shakspeare, in a laughing manner, that he fancied he intended to write his epitaph, if he happened to outlive him, and since he could not know what might be said of him when he was dead, he desired it might be done immediately, upon which Shakspeare gave him these four lines :—

'Ten in the hundred lies here ingrav'd ;
'T is a hundred to ten his soul is not sav'd ;
If any man ask, Who lies in this tomb ?
Oh ! Oh ! quoth the devil, 't is my John-a-Combe.'

But the sharpness of the satire is said to have stung the man so severely, that he never forgave it." Certainly this is an extraordinary illustration of Shakspeare's "pleasurable wit and good nature"—of those qualities which won for him the name of the "gentle Shakspeare ;" which made Jonson, stern enough to most men, proclaim—"He was honest, and of an open and free

nature," and that his "mind and manners" were reflected in his "well-turned and true-filed lines." John-a-Combe never forgave the sharpness of the satire! And yet he bequeathed by his last will "To Mr. William Shakspeare, five pounds." Aubrey tells the story with a difference:—"One time, as he was at the tavern at Stratford-upon-Avon, one Combes, an old rich usurer, was to be buried, he makes there this extemporary epitaph;" and then he gives the lines with a variation, in which "vows" rhymes to "allows," instead of "sav'd" to "ingrav'd." Of course, following out this second story, the family of John Combe resented the insult to the memory of their parent, who died in 1614; and yet an intimacy subsisted between them even till the death of Shakspeare, for in his own will he bequeaths to the son of the usurer a remarkable token of personal regard, the badge of a gentleman:—"To Mr. Thomas Combe my sword." The whole story is a fabrication. Ten in the hundred was the old name of opprobrium for one who lent money. To receive interest at all was called usury. "That ten in the hundred was gone to the devil," was an old joke, that shaped itself into epigrams long before the death of John Combe; and in the 'Remains of Richard Brathwaite,' printed in 1618, we have the very epitaph assigned to Shakspeare, with a third set of variations, given as a notable production of this voluminous writer: "Upon one John Combe, of Stratford-upon-Avon, a notable usurer, fastened upon a Tombe that he had caused to be built in his Lifetime." The lie direct is given by the will of John Combe to this third version of the lines against

him ; for it directs that a convenient tomb shall be erected one year after his decease.

The register of marriages at Stratford-upon-Avon for the year 1607 contains the entry of the marriage of John Hall, gentleman, and Susanna Shakspeare, on the 5th June. Susanna, the eldest daughter of William Shakspeare, was now twenty-four years of age. John Hall, gentleman, a physician settled at Stratford, was in his thirty-second year. This appears in every respect to have been a propitious alliance. Shakspeare received into his family a man of learning and talent.

The season at which the marriage of Shakspeare's elder daughter took place would appear to give some corroboration to the belief that, at this period, he had wholly ceased to be an actor. It is not likely that an event to him so deeply interesting would have taken place during his absence from Stratford. It was the season of performances at the Globe. It is at this period that we can fix the date of 'Lear.' That wonderful tragedy was first published in 1608 ; and the title-page recites that "It was plaid before the King's Majesty at White-Hall, uppon S. Stephen's Night ; in Christmas Hollidaies." This most extraordinary production might well have been the first fruits of a period of comparative leisure ; when the creative faculty was wholly untrammelled by petty cares, and the judgment might be employed in working again and again upon the first conceptions, so as to produce such a masterpiece of consummate art without after labour. The next season of repose gave birth to an effort of genius wholly different in character ; but almost as wonderful in its profound

sagacity and knowledge of the world, as 'Lear' is unequalled for its depth of individual passion. 'Troilus and Cressida' was published in 1609. We may well believe that the Sonnets were published in 1609, without the consent of their author. That the appearance of those remarkable lyrics should have annoyed him, by exposing, as they now appear in the eyes of some to do, the frailties of his nature, we do not for a moment believe. They would be received by his family and by the world as essentially fictitious; and ranked with the productions of the same class with which the age abounded.

The year 1608 brought its domestic joys and calamities to Shakspeare. In the same font where he had been baptized, forty-three years before, was baptized, on the 21st of February, his grand-daughter, "Elizabeth, daughter of John Hall." In the same grave where his father was laid in 1601, was buried his mother, "Mary Shakspeare, widow," on the 9th of September, 1608. She was the youngest daughter of Robert Arden, who died in 1556. She was probably, therefore, about seventy years of age when her sons followed her to the "house of all living."

There is a memorandum existing, by Thomas Greene, a contemporary of Shakspeare, residing at Stratford, which, under the date of November 17th, 1614, has this record:—"My cousin Shakspeare coming yesterday to town, I went to see him how he did." We cite this memorandum here, as an indication of Shakspeare's habit of occasionally visiting London; for Thomas Greene was then in the capital, with the intent of opposing the project of an inclosure at Stratford. The

frequency of Shakspeare's visits to London would essentially depend upon the nature of his connexion with the theatres. He was a permanent shareholder, as we have seen, at the Blackfriars; and no doubt at the Globe also. His interests as a sharer might be diligently watched over by his fellows; and he might only have visited London when he had a new play to bring forward, the fruit of his leisure in the country. But until he disposed of his wardrobe and other properties, more frequent demands might be made upon his personal attendance than if he were totally free from the responsibilities belonging to the charge of such an embarrassing stock in trade. Mr. Collier has printed a memorandum in the handwriting of Edward Alleyn, dated April 1612, of the payment of various sums "for the Blackfryers," amounting to 599*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* Mr. Collier adds, "To whom the money was paid is nowhere stated; but, for aught we know, it was to Shakespeare himself, and just anterior to his departure from London." The memorandum is introduced with the observation, "It seems very likely, from evidence now for the first time to be adduced, that Alleyn became the purchaser of our great dramatist's interest in the theatre, properties, wardrobe, and stock of the Blackfriars." Certainly the document itself says nothing about properties, wardrobe, and stock. It is simply as follows:—

"1612.

Money paid by me E. A. for the Blackfryers	160 li
More for the Blackfryers . . .	126 li
More againe for the Leasse . . .	310 li
The writings for the same, and other small charges . . .	3 li 6 <i>s.</i> 8 <i>d.</i> "

More than half of the entire sum is paid "again for the lease." If the estimate "For avoiding of the Playhouse,"* be not rejected as an authority, the conjecture of Mr. Collier that the property purchased by Alleyn belonged to Shakspeare is wholly untenable; for the Fee, valued at a thousand pounds, was the property of Burbage, and to the owner of the Fee would be paid the sum for the lease. Subsequent memoranda by Alleyn show that he paid rent for the Blackfriars, and expended sums upon the building—collateral proofs that it was not Shakspeare's personal property that he bought in April 1612. There is distinct evidence furnished by another document that Shakspeare was not a resident in London in 1613; for in an indenture executed by him on the 10th of March in that year, for the purchase of a dwelling-house in the precinct of the Blackfriars, he is described as "William Shakespeare of Stratforde Upon Avon in the countie of Warwick gentleman;" whilst his fellow John Hemyng, who is a party to the same deed, is described as "of London, gentleman." From the situation of the property it would appear to have been bought either as an appurtenance to the theatre, or for some protection of the interests of the sharers. In the deed of 1602, Shakspeare is also described as of Stratford-upon-Avon. It is natural that he should be so described, in a deed for the purchase of land at Stratford; but upon the same principle, had he been a resident in London in 1613, he would have been described as of London in a deed for the purchase of property in London. Yet we also look

* See page 382.

upon this conveyance as evidence that Shakspeare had in March 1613 not wholly severed himself from his interest in the theatre. He is in London at the signing of the deed, attending, probably, to the duties which still devolved upon him as a sharer in the Blackfriars. He is not a resident in London; he has come to town, as Thomas Greene describes in 1614. But we have no evidence that he sold his theatrical property at all. Certainly the evidence that he sold it to Edward Alleyn may be laid aside in any attempt to fix the date of Shakspeare's departure from London.

Every one agrees that during the last three or four years of his life Shakspeare ceased to write. Yet we venture to think that every one is in error. The opinion is founded upon a belief that he only finally left London towards the close of 1613. We have shown, from his purchase of a large house at Stratford, his constant acquisition of landed property there, his active engagements in the business of agriculture, the interest which he took in matters connected with his property in which his neighbours had a common interest, that he must have partially left London before this period. There were no circumstances, as far as we can collect, to have prevented him finally leaving London several years before 1613. But his biographers, having fixed a period for the termination of his connexion with the active business of the theatre, assume that he became wholly unemployed; that he gave himself up, as Rowe has described, to "ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends." His income was enough, they say, to dispense with labour; and therefore he did not

labour. But when the days of leisure arrived, is it reasonable to believe that the mere habit of his life would not assert its ordinary control ; that the greatest of intellects would suddenly sink to the condition of an every-day man—cherishing no high plans for the future, looking back with no desire to equal and excel the work of the past ? At the period of life when Chaucer began to write the ‘*Canterbury Tales*,’ Shakspeare, according to his biographers, was suddenly and utterly to cease to write. We cannot believe it. Is there a parallel case in the career of any great artist who had won for himself competence and fame ? Is the mere applause of the world, and a sufficiency of the goods of life, “the end-all and the be-all” of the labours of a mighty mind ? These attained, is the voice of his spiritual being to be heard no more ? If those who reason thus could present a satisfactory record of the dates of all Shakspeare’s works, and especially of his later works, we should still cling to the belief that some fruits of the last years of his literary industry had wholly perished. It is unnecessary, as it appears to us, to adopt any such theory. Without the means of fixing the precise date of many particular dramas, we have indisputable traces, up to this period, of the appearance of at least five-sixths of all Shakspeare’s undoubted works. Are there any dramas whose individual appearance is not accounted for by those who have attempted to fix the exact chronology of other plays ? There are such dramas, and they form a class. They are the three great Roman plays of ‘*Coriolanus*,’ ‘*Julius Cæsar*,’ and ‘*Antony and Cleopatra*.’

The happy quiet of Shakspeare's retreat was not wholly undisturbed by calamity, domestic and public. His brother Richard, who was ten years his junior, was buried at Stratford on the 4th of February, 1613. Of his father's family his sister Joan, who had married Mr. William Hart of Stratford, was probably the only other left. There is no record of the death of his brother Gilbert; but as he is not mentioned in the will of William, in all likelihood he died before him. Oldys, in his manuscript notes upon Langbaine, has a story of "One of Shakspeare's younger brothers, who lived to a good old age, even some years, as I compute, after the restoration of King Charles II." Gilbert was born in 1566; so that if he had lived some years after the restoration of Charles II. it is not surprising that "his memory was weakened," as Oldys reports, and that he could give "the most noted actors" but "little satisfaction in their endeavours to learn something from him of his brother." The story of Oldys is clearly apocryphal, as far as regards any brother of Shakspeare's. They were a short-lived race. His sister, indeed, survived him thirty years. The family at New Place, at this period, would be composed therefore of his wife only, and his unmarried daughter Judith; unless his elder daughter and his son-in-law formed a part of the same household, with their only child Elizabeth, who was born in 1608. The public calamity to which we have alluded was a great fire, which broke out at Stratford on the 9th of July, 1614. That Shakspeare assisted with all the energy of his character in alleviating the miseries of this calamity, and in the restoration of his

town, we cannot doubt. In the same year we find him taking some interest in the project of an inclosure of the common-fields of Stratford. The inclosure would probably have improved his property, and especially have increased the value of the tithes, of the moiety of which he held a lease. The Corporation of Stratford were opposed to the inclosure. They held that it would be injurious to the poorer inhabitants, who were then deeply suffering from the desolation of the fire; and they appear to have been solicitous that Shakspeare should take the same view of the matter as themselves. His friend William Combe, then high sheriff of the county, was a principal person engaged in forwarding the inclosure. The Corporation sent their common clerk, Thomas Greene, to London, to oppose the project; and a memorandum in his hand-writing, which still remains, exhibits the business-like manner in which Shakspeare informed himself of the details of the plan. The first memorandum is dated the 17th of November, 1614, and is as follows:—"My Cosen Shakspeare comyng yesterday to town, I went to see how he did. He told me that they assured him they ment to inclose no further than to Gospel Bush, and so upp straight (leaving out pt. of the Dyngles to the field) to the gate in Clopton hedg, and take in Salisbury's peece; and that they mean in Aprill to svey. the land and then to gyve satisfaccion, and not before: and he and Mr. Hall say they think yr. will be nothyng done at all." Mr. Greene appears to have returned to Stratford in about a fortnight after the date of this memorandum, and Shakspeare seems to have remained in London; for ac-

cording to a second memorandum, which is damaged and partly illegible, an official letter was written to Shakspeare by the Corporation, accompanied by a private letter from Mr. Greene, moving him to exert his influence against this plan of the inclosure :—" 23 Dec. A. Hall, Lres. wrytten, one to Mr. Manyring—another to Mr. Shakspeare, with almost all the company's hands to eyther. I also wrytte myself to my Csn. Shakspear, the coppyes of all our . . . then also a note of the inconvenyences wold . . . by the inclosure." Arthur Mannering, to whom one of these letters was written by the Corporation, was officially connected with the Lord Chancellor, and then residing at his house; and from the letter to him, which has been preserved, "it appears that he was apprised of the injury to be expected from the intended inclosure; reminded of the damage that Stratford, then 'lying in the ashes of desolation,' had sustained from recent fires; and entreated to forbear the inclosure." The letter to Shakspeare has not been discovered. The fact of its having been written leaves no doubt of the importance which was attached to his opinion by his neighbours. Truly in his later years he had

"Honour, love, obedience, troops of friends."

The younger daughter of Shakspeare was married on the 10th of February, 1616, to Thomas Quiney, as the register of Stratford shows. Thomas Quiney was the son of Richard Quiney of Stratford, whom we have seen in 1598 soliciting the kind offices of his loving countryman Shakspeare. Thomas, who was born in

1588, was probably a well-educated man. The last will of Shakspeare would appear to have been prepared in some degree with reference to this marriage. It is dated the 25th of March, 1616; but the word "Januarii" seems to have been first written and afterwards struck out, "Martii" having been written above it. It is not unlikely, and indeed it appears most probable, that the document was prepared before the marriage of Judith; for the elder daughter is mentioned as Susanna Hall,—the younger simply as Judith. To her, one hundred pounds is bequeathed, and fifty pounds conditionally. The life-interest of a further sum of one hundred and fifty pounds is also bequeathed to her, with remainder to her children; but if she died without issue within three years after the date of the will, the hundred and fifty pounds was to be otherwise appropriated. We pass over the various legacies to relations and friends to come to the bequest of the great bulk of the property. All the real estate is devised to his daughter Susanna Hall, for and during the term of her natural life. It is then entailed upon her first son and his heirs male; and in default of such issue, to her second son and his heirs male; and so on: in default of such issue, to his granddaughter Elizabeth Hall (called in the language of the time his "niece"): and in default of such issue, to his daughter Judith and her heirs male. By this strict entailment it was manifestly the object of Shakspeare to found a family. Like many other such purposes of short-sighted humanity the object was not accomplished. His elder daughter had no issue but Elizabeth, and she died

childless. The heirs male of Judith died before her. The estates were scattered after the second generation; and the descendants of his sister were the only transmitters to posterity of his blood and lineage.

"Item, I give unto my wife my second-best bed, with the furniture." This is the clause of the will upon which, for half a century, all men believed that Shakspeare recollected his wife only to mark how little he esteemed her,—to "cut her off, not indeed with a shilling, but with an old bed."* We had the satisfaction of first showing the utter groundlessness of this opinion; and we here briefly repeat the statement which we made in our Postscript to 'Twelfth Night,' that the wife of Shakspeare was unquestionably provided for by the natural operation of the law of England. His estates, with the exception of a copyhold tenement, expressly mentioned in his will, were *freehold*. *His wife was entitled to dower*. She was provided for amply, *by the clear and undeniable operation of the English law*. Of the houses and gardens which Shakspeare inherited from his father, she was assured of the life-interest of a third, should she survive her husband, the instant that old John Shakspeare died. Of the capital messuage called New Place, the best house in Stratford, which Shakspeare purchased in 1597, she was assured of the same life-interest, from the moment of the conveyance, provided it was a direct conveyance to her husband. That it was so conveyed we may infer from the terms of the conveyance of the lands in Old Stratford, and

other places, which were purchased by Shakspeare in 1602, and were then conveyed "to the onlye proper use and behoofe of the saide William Shakspeare, his heires and assignes, for ever." Of a life-interest in a third of these lands also was she assured. The tenement in Blackfriars, purchased in 1614, was conveyed to Shakspeare and *three other persons*; and after his death was re-conveyed by those persons to the uses of his will, "for and in performance of the confidence and trust in them reposed by William Shakespeare deceased." In this estate, certainly, the widow of our poet had not dower. It has been remarked to us that even the express mention of the *second-best bed* was anything but unkindness and insult; that the best bed was in all probability an heir-loom: it might have descended to Shakspeare himself from his father as an heir-loom, and, as such, was the property of his own heirs. The best bed was considered amongst the most important of those chattels which went to the heir by custom with the house.*

The will of Shakspeare thus commences:—"I, William Shakspeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, gent., in perfect health and memory, (God be praised!) do make and ordain this my last will and

* "And note that in some places chattels as heir-looms (as the best bed, table, pot, pan, cart, and other dead chattels moveable) may go to the heir, and the heir in that case may have an action for them at the common law, and shall not sue for them in the ecclesiastical court; but the heir-loom is due by custom, and not by the common law."—*Coke upon Littleton*, 18 b.

testament." And yet within one month of this declaration William Shakspeare is no more :

OBIIT ANO. DOM. 1616. ÆTATIS 53. DIE 23. AP.

Such is the inscription on his tomb. It is corroborated by the register of his burial :—" April 25. Will Shakspeare gent." Writing forty-six years after the event, the vicar of Stratford says, "Shakspeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merry meeting, and, it seems, drank too hard, for Shakspeare died of a fever there contracted." A tradition of this nature, surviving its object nearly half a century, is not much to be relied on. But if it were absolutely true, our reverence for Shakspeare would not be diminished by the fact that he accelerated his end in the exercise of hospitality, according to the manner of his age, towards two of the most illustrious of his friends. The "merry-meeting," the last of many social hours spent with the full-hearted Jonson and the elegant Drayton, may be contemplated without a painful feeling. Shakspeare possessed a mind eminently social—" he was of a free and generous nature." But, says the tradition of half a century, "he drank too hard" at this "merry meeting." We believe that this is the vulgar colouring of a common incident. He "died of a fever there contracted." The fever that is too often the attendant upon a hot spring, when the low grounds upon a river bank have been recently inundated, is a fever that the good people of Stratford did not well understand at that day. The "merry meeting" rounded off a tradition much more effectively. Whatever was the immediate cause of his last illness, we may well

believe that the closing scene was full of tranquillity and hope; and that he who had sought, perhaps more than any man, to look beyond the material and finite things of the world, should rest at last in the "peace which passeth all understanding"—in that assured belief which the opening of his will has expressed with far more than formal solemnity:—"I commend my soul into the hands of God my creator, hoping, and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting."



ADDITIONAL NOTES
AND SUGGESTED EMENDATIONS.
SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUME.

THE POEMS OF SHAKSPERE.

VENUS AND ADONIS.

Page 29.

"For to a pretty *ear* she tunes her tale."—Mr Collier asks whether this be not a misprint for *air*. In fact, two pages further on, *ear* is made to rhyme with *hair*; and it is pronounced *air* in Shakspeare's native county.

Page 32.

"From morn *to* night."—In every old edition: "From morn *till* night."

THE RAPE OF LUCRECE.

Page 90.

"And thy ill aim, before thy *shoot* be ended."—A play is here intended on the words *shoot* and *suit*, which were pronounced alike.

Page 123.

"*But* stood, like old acquaintance in a trance,
Met far from home, wondering each other's chance."

No sense here. Every old edition has :

"*Both* stood, like old acquaintance," &c.

S O N N E T S.

SONNET XV.

"That this huge *state* presenteth nought but shows."
Stage, in the original. The modern editors merely copy the misprint of Malone's edition.

SONNET XX.

"A man in hue, all *hues* in his controlling."

Hues is spelled *Heues* in the original, with a capital letter, and in italics, as *Will* is spelled in Sonnet CXXXVI. It is supposed to refer, perhaps, to "Mr. W. H.," "the only begetter of these sonnets," whose name Tyrwhitt makes out to be Hughes.

SONNET CXXVII.

"Sweet beauty hath no *name*, no holy *hour*."

Bower, in the original. The modern editors copy the error of Malone.

SONNET CXXXII.

"Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me
Knowing thy heart, *torment* me with disdain."

The sense is not clear. Mr Collier, with a very slight alteration, reads, making the second line parenthetical :

"Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
(Knowing thy heart *torments* me with disdain),
Have put on black, and loving mourners be."

A LOVER'S COMPLAINT.

Page 210.

"*Bedded jet.*"—Probably, "*Beaded jet.*"

Page 213.

"All aids, themselves made fairer by their place,
Can for additions."

"*Cume* for additions."—*Malone.*

S O N G.

Page 235.

Of this song, the first stanza is introduced into "*Measure for Measure*," and was probably written by Shakspeare. We find *both* stanzas in the "*Bloody Brother*" of Fletcher. It is demonstrable that the two stanzas are by different hands. The first is the address of a woman to a man, and is, in fact, sung in "*Measure for Measure*" as applicable to Mariana; the other is the address of a man to a woman. It were easy to multiply proofs.



